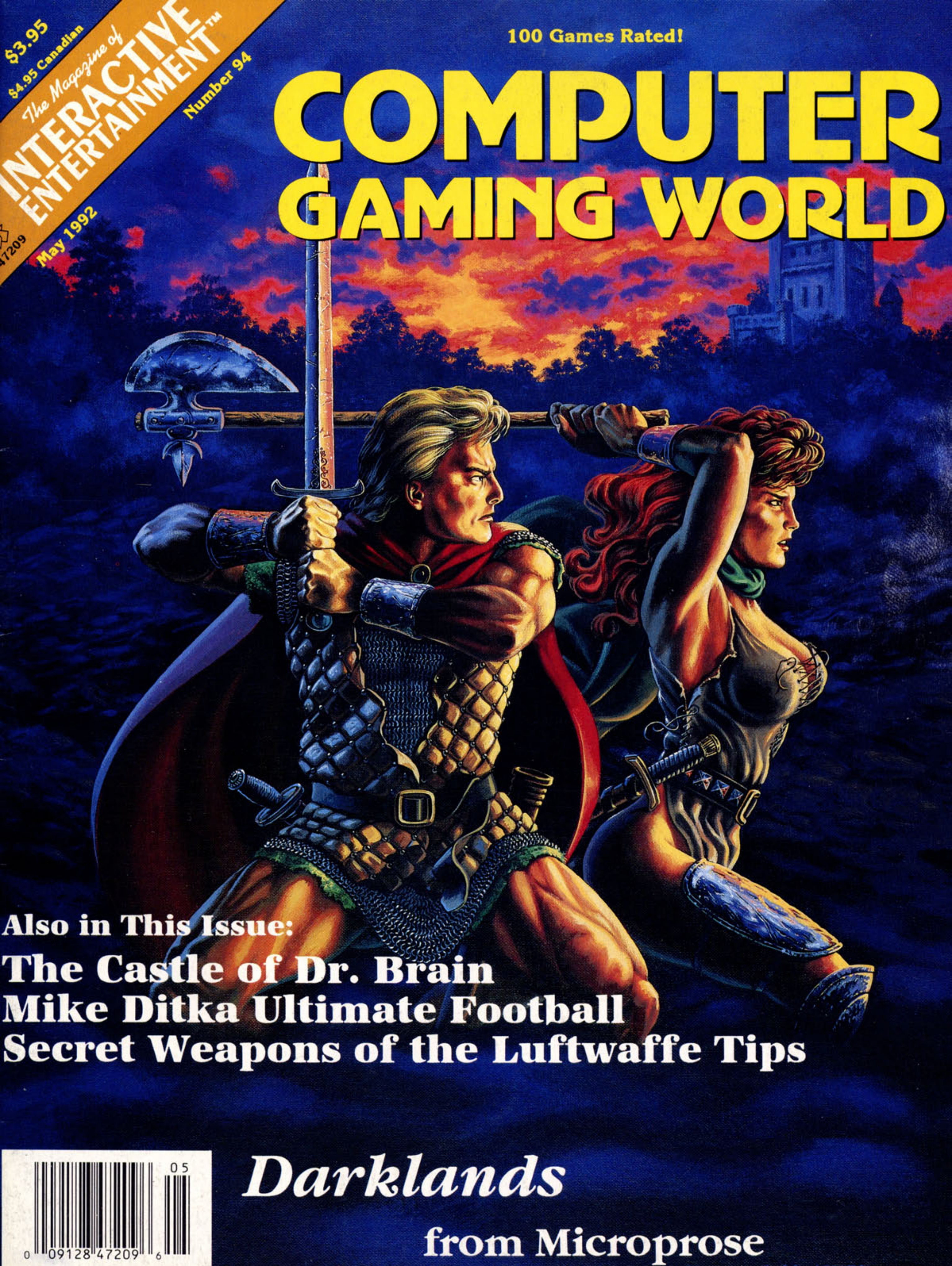


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Number 94

May 1992

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COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

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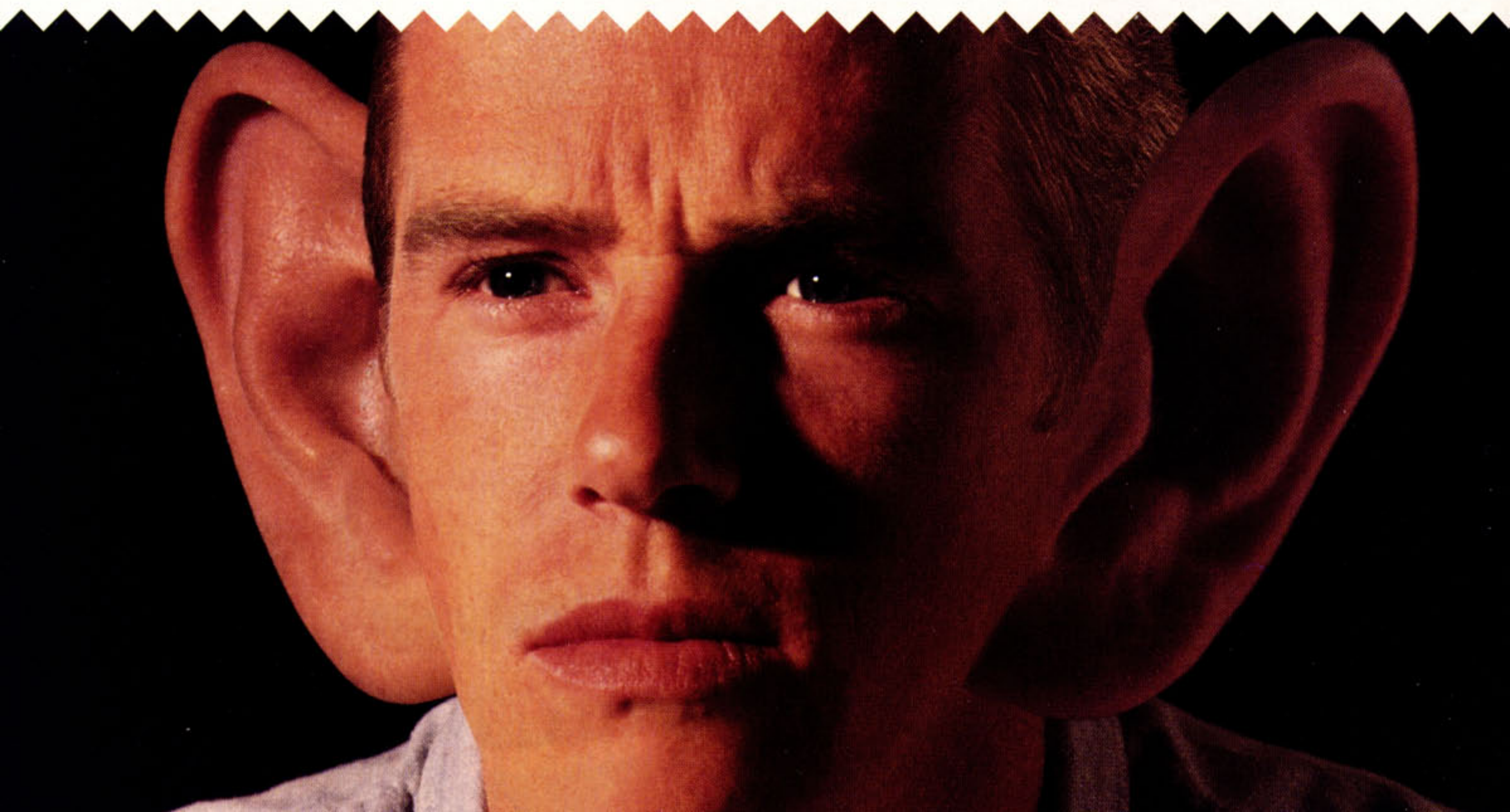
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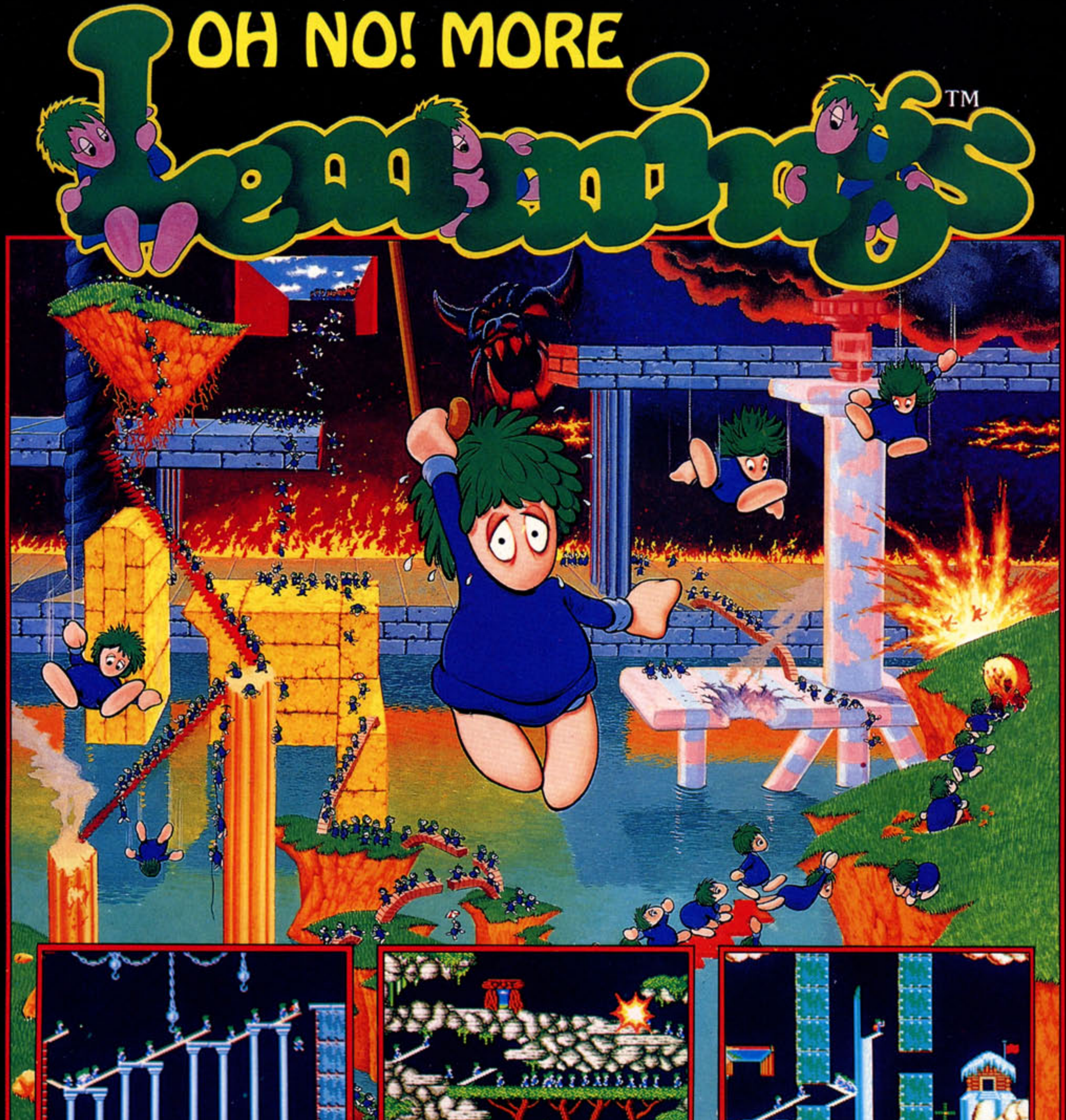
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Computer Gaming World (ISSN 0744-6667) is published monthly by **Golden Empire Publications, Inc.**, 130 Chaparral Ct. Suite 260, Anaheim Hills, CA 92808. Second-Class Postage paid at Erlanger, KY 41011 and additional mailing offices. Permit #672-910

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Computer Gaming World*, P.O. Box 730, Yorba Linda, CA 92686-8629.
The subscription rate for twelve issues (one year) is $28.00. Canadian and foreign surface subscriptions add $11.00. Foreign air subscriptions are $78.00 per year. All payments must be in U.S. dollars, made by check drawn upon a U.S. bank, Visa, MasterCard, or money order.

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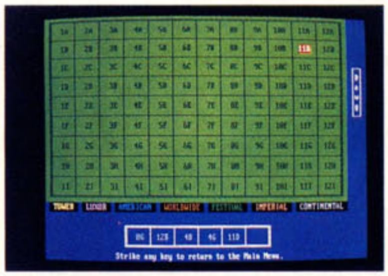


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Access
Salt Lake City, UT

BARTON CREEK: Yet another in the graphically beautiful course supplements for *Links*, *Links: Barton Creek* features the site of the senior PGA Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf Tournament located in the wide-open hill country of Texas. *CGW* #89 (p.26) featured the background behind the creation of this course disk. IBM ($24.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

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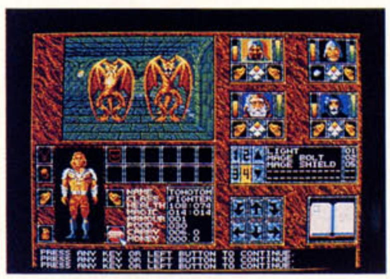
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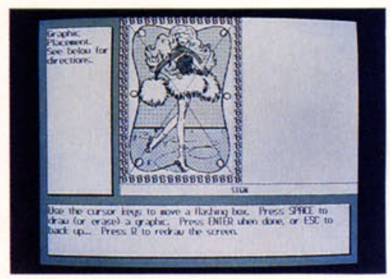
MiG-29 Fulcrum



Ecology



Abandoned Places



Barbie Design Studio

The Avalon Hill Game Company
Baltimore, MD

COMPUTER ACQUIRE: In this update of the computerized boardgame classic *Acquire*, players get to see a color-coded gameboard (as though they were playing the boardgame) and to input commands via a mouse-driven interface. Players now have the option of knowing or not knowing exactly how many shares the opponents have. The former is useful for novices, the latter makes a better game. The new opponents are significantly improved, as well. IBM ($24.95). Circle Reader Service #2.

Corn Gods Publishing Company, Inc.
33 Catalpa Terrace
Darien, CT 86820
(203) 967-4002

ET CORN GODS GAME: Based on the premise that God had extraterrestrials ("ETs") come to earth and put hidden meanings into the words of the English language, the player's challenge is to unravel over 5,000 such word puzzles. Online tutorials replace written instructions, teaching both the use of language in the game, as well as the game rules (which are mind-numbingly numerous and remarkably bizarre). Weird (to say the least) in premise, these word puzzles are for truly deep thinkers. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #3.

Domark
c/o Accolade
San Jose, CA

MIG-29 FULCRUM: A loosely collated series of missions in search of a campaign game (which is not, alas, included), this product is a fairly standard example of European flight simulations. Although there are some innovative instruments on the panel and there is a certain fascination with fighting *against* NATO warplanes, without any head-to-head playing features, there are limits to the game's scope. While the real MiG-29s are among the world's most advanced fighters, the game is not in a corresponding position with regard to flight simulators. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

Earthquest, Inc.
125 University
Palo Alto, CA 94301
(415) 321-5838

ECOLOGY: Edutainment on an ecological theme, this environmentally conscious program is designed in the "click and explore" tradition, rather than presented as a "pure" game. With many *SimEarth*-like features to it, the interface provides easy access to charts and graphs, ecology games, the sounds of nature, animations and many other features. An EcoSimulator demonstrates a pure "cause and effect" relationship upon the environment. Perhaps the most entertaining, however, is the Renegade Tour. This is a highly amusing sequence in which players become vegetables with the task of fixing the environment of planet "Whatamess." It's hard to tell who will like this package more, teachers or students. Macintosh ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

Electronic Zoo
Baltimore, MD

ABANDONED PLACES: This new CRPG, a British import, is something of a cross between *Dungeon Master* in terms of appearance and *Might & Magic II* in terms of world scope. There is definitely a large universe packed in the box, with some new twists on ways to travel that are akin to the *Ultima* series (horse, air, ship, etc.). Based on the usual epic quest of good versus evil, the game is mouse- and icon-driven and features a 40-page history book to supplement the scant 12 pages of game documentation. Amiga (no price). Circle Reader Service #6.

Hi Tech Expressions
New York, NY

BARBIE DESIGN STUDIO: If there's a little girl in your house, here's the software that will remove any computer shyness from her personality. Complete with graphics such as Barbie's Magic Mansion and her famous '57 Chevy, the usual signs, posters and other print kit features abound. However, this program also offers a diary printout, plus various organizers (including a *homework planner!*). Perhaps best of all, the "dot matrix" look has been somewhat abated in order for the printouts to demonstrate more of the smoother, rounded features of the product's namesake. IBM ($24.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

Interstel
Richardson, TX

DUSK OF THE GODS: If the names of Midgard, Asgard and Jotunheim have any special meaning to you, that might pique a special interest in this CRPG based on Norse mythology. With a manual that is not only a fascinating recapitulation of Norse legends, but also features a huge glossary (which comes in very handy during the game), this CRPG features multiple endings, non-linear plot lines and the ability to print out character interaction for later reference. Between items found and sacrifices made to the likes of Odin, Thor, Tyr and Freya, *Dusk* might be considered Valhalla'va game and well worth a Loki. IBM ($69.95). Circle Reader Service #8.



Dusk of the Gods



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Wild Wheels



Casino Pack 1



Paperboy 2



Chessmaster 3000

Jaeger Software
7800 White Cliff Terrace
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(301) 948-6862

FIGHTER DUEL: CORSAIR VERSUS ZERO: Heralded as a technological breakthrough for achieving a frame rate as high as 28 frames per second on a high-resolution display mode, this is made even more impressive when one considers that the aircraft are both bit-mapped down to the smallest image. While taking advantage of every piece of advanced Amiga hardware that can be thrown at it, the awkward interface, which requires manipulation of the mouse *and* the joystick, leaves something to be desired. Naturally, a flight simulator that only concentrates on *two* very specific aircraft will be rich in detail for them and the planes are brutally realistic, almost to the point of being testy and rather difficult to fly. A two-player option using modem or serial mode exists for this well-received piece of Amiga software. ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #9.

Ocean Software
San Jose, CA

WILD WHEELS: With a soccer-like object of pushing a huge metal ball toward the goal, teams of cars and drivers zoom around the arena in this team sport of car-to-car combat. The court can become quite frenzied as ten cars maneuver around, collecting weapons and repair tokens, while trying to keep the ball in the other player's side of the field. Each player (two can play head-to-head via

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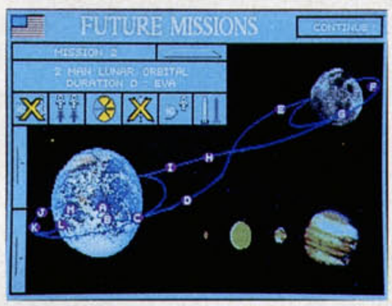
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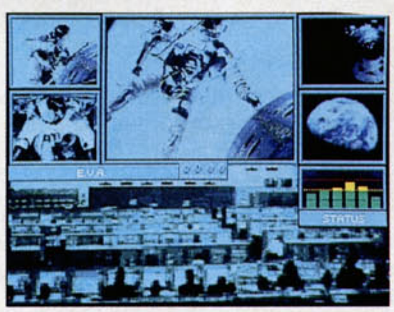
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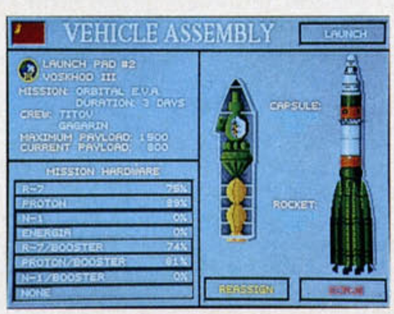
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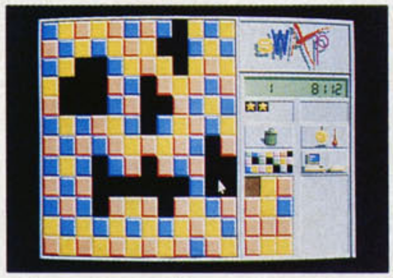
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serial or network) controls the team's lead car, while four robot cars are programmed to attack, block, guard the goal, etc. It seems very exciting in a *Projectyle* sort of way. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

PC Globe, Inc.
Tempe, AZ

BUSH BUCK — GLOBAL TREASURE HUNTER: This is a repackaging of *Bushbuck Charms, Viking Ships & Dodo Eggs* as reviewed in issue #88, page 102. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

Simulations Canada
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia

MAIN BATTLE TANK: MIDDLE EAST: Another in SimCan's tactical armored warfare games, players issue orders to their troops via menus and await reports which come in "over the radio" (i.e., are read along the bottom of the screen as text). This one focuses on modern warfare in the Middle East with 75% of the scenarios postulating Arab-Israeli conflicts while the remainder covers Desert Storm with the description: "The Americans [soldiers] are volunteers, convinced in an almost imperial fashion of their own innate superiority." Players may also create their own scenarios. The game features no graphics or special sound support. IBM ($60.00). Circle Reader Service #12.

PACIFIC STORM: THE MIDWAY CAMPAIGN: Another in the SimCan "command viewpoint" series, this one covers a crucial ten-week period immediately following the Doolittle raid over Japan during WWII. The Japanese needed a "big victory" to force the Americans to the bargaining table, while the Americans needed *any* victory in the Pacific to prop up flagging morale. Thus, both sides will be mustering their forces, with Midway as the focal point of the campaign. Reviewed on page 99 of this issue. IBM ($60.00). Circle Reader Service #13.

Software Toolworks
Novato, CA

CASINO PACK 1: For the casual casino game player with *Windows*, this package includes four games: Roulette (with both European single-0 and American 00 wheels) for one or two players, Keno, Blackjack (playing 1-6 decks) and Poker (which is really "Video" Poker). The latter three games are solitaire play only, and Poker includes some arcade sound effects to go with three variations of play. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #14.

PAPERBOY 2: Sequel to the hit arcade game, *Paperboy 2* features new and larger neighborhoods to terrorize (er ... in which to deliver papers). New obstacles and bicycle stunts are also "rolled up" and ready for delivery in this arcade fest. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #15.

THE CHESSMASTER 3000: The battle for chess game supremacy has gone in many directions, but this product concentrates on new *features*. Oh, sure, there are more graphics (2- and 3-D views and multiple chess sets), but the capacity for creating computer opponents with unique personalities, analysis in plain English (as opposed to "chess jargon") and a variety of other features make for an impressive package. The latest **Software Toolworks** chess program may well be worth sacrificing a few pawns in order to capture it. IBM ($49.95, $59.95 for Windows version). Circle Reader Service #16.

U.S. ATLAS 3.0 and WORLD ATLAS 3.0: Adding even more features to these standard computer reference programs, information is presented for ease of use and understanding through use of the *Windows* environment. Persons can now create their own informational databases and add them permanently to these atlases, as well as making map notations (both with text and customizable icons). Naturally, everything can be copied and pasted to other documents through *Windows* and printed out (with a *Windows*-compatible printer). One might even be able to pin Carmen Sandiego down with *these* maps! IBM ($79.95). Circle Reader Service #17.

Titus Software Corporation
20432 Corisco Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311
(818) 709-3692

PREHISTORIK: This 2-D scrolling arcade game puts a club in the prehistoric player's hands and has him bashing for burgers everything in sight. Cute, with a few puns and plenty of straightforward arcade game play, this one is definitely a prehistoric computer game, all right. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #18.

SWAP: A simple puzzle game of tile swapping and removal, this European import has rules printed in three languages. Quite an interesting and challenging system for "tournament" or "campaign" play, "Swap" uses shapes (squares, hexagons and triangles) to form colorful puzzles to drive players mad. Puzzle lovers will want to get their P-A-W-S on S-W-A-P. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #19.

Way Forward Technologies
1000 MacArthur Blvd. #32
Santa Ana, CA 92707
(714) 434-9795

WAY FORWARD FUN PACK FOR MICROSOFT WINDOWS: Seven games of the classic ilk for *Windows* 3.0 or later, including a *Breakout* clone, a *Pac Man* clone, a *Missile Command* clone, a *Rescue Raiders* clone, a *Tetris* clone, an *Asteroids* clone and an Apple II-looking game of "grab the icon before the wandering icons touch you" called *Jewel Thief*. This product underscores the adage "everything old is new again." IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #20. CGW

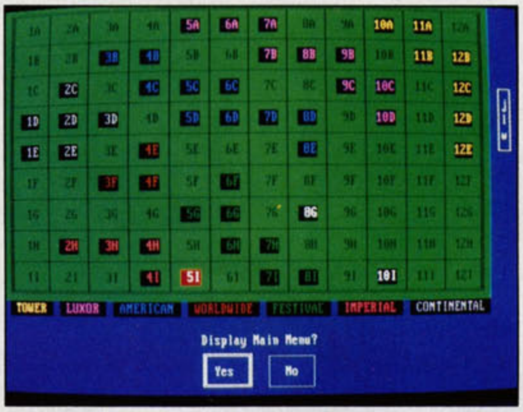

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Hostel Takeovers for the Inn Crowd

Tips and Techniques for Avalon Hill's Computer Acquire

by Johnny L. Wilson





Long, long ago in a time continuum far, far out, **Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Corporation (3M)** published a line of *Bookshelf Games*. Although the line boasted some trivia and generic strategy games, the most prominent titles emphasized business (*Acquire*, *Executive Decision* and *Stocks & Bonds*). Although they were all boardgames, they heralded the types of games to be programmed for the computer games of the future. *Executive Decision* was the forerunner of management games like **SSI**'s early *Cartels & Cutthroats* (by Dan Bunten), **Britannica Software**'s *Managing for Success* and **PRODIGY**'s *CEO*. *Stocks & Bonds* was a multi-player implementation of personal investing that was concept-oriented, as opposed to the data intensive *Millionaire II* and *The American Investor* from **Britannica Software**. **Acquire** was an abstract multi-player strategy game of hotel mergers.

When **The Avalon Hill Game Company** purchased the *Bookshelf Games* line from **3M**, both *Stocks & Bonds* and *Acquire* looked like prime candidates for computer versions of the games. Indeed, both games had a brief stint on computer store shelves, but *Computer Acquire* outlasted its sister games (perhaps because of the continued success of the boardgame version).

Both the boardgame and the computer game versions of *Acquire* feature the same simple game mechanics. Players draw a handful of tiles, play them on the game board to create hotel chains, build the chains up or merge them together. Each turn, one tile is played and up to three shares of stock can be purchased. The goal, of course, is to parlay one's stock holdings into the most money when all hotel chains are liquidated at the conclusion of the game.

The original version of *Computer Acquire* was on the Apple II. The Apple version of the game was virtually all text (the gameboard was more limited than the Spartan graphics used in the present version); featured relatively poor computer opponents; required keyboard input and allowed all players to see all of the stock held by the other players. The first IBM version offered only a slight improvement of graphics and opponents, but was basically a straight conversion of the Apple and still allowed players to see everyone's holdings. The latest IBM version of the game supports, but does not require, a mouse and solves that earlier problem. Now, one can choose whether to display them or not. The latest version also provides a greater variety of tougher opponents.

Making a Continental Breakfast out of the Imperial Opposition

Here are some strategic considerations for corporate raiders who find themselves playing against the more aggressive computer opponents in the latest version. Initially, alert players will realize that the human player will not always be able to form a hotel chain (particularly when the human is Player 1 and plays the first tile). The computer-controlled players form hotels faster than human players and seem to get the benefit of the doubt when drawing tiles. So, in order to win the game, it will be necessary to control the mergers. To maximize the chance of controlling mergers, a player should make a mental note of the area with the most concentrated number of tiles available in his/her inventory. Then one should try to gain majority interest in a hotel chain in that area, regardless of what the other players do.

If possible, one should gain majority interest in the lowest-priced (or smallest) hotel chain in that area. This offers two advantages. First, it leaves one with a war chest in case there needs to be a switch in tactics when one assaults another chain. Second, whenever two hotel chains have an equal number of hotels, the lower-priced chain is the one which is purchased. Since one only gleans the shareholder bonus when the chain in which one has majority interest is merged *into* a dominant chain, it is best to be invested in the less upscale chain. This gives one the bonus money from the merger to buy into other chains and, most importantly, allows one to trade the stock from the less expensive chain in a two-for-one for the stock from the more expensive one.

Note also that astute gamers almost always trade a merging chain's stock in the two-for-one transaction, even when the price of one share in the higher-priced chain is less than the total of two shares of the lower-priced chain. The rationale is that a player can only *buy* a total of three shares per turn. If the two-for-one trade is accepted, however, it is possible to get a number of shares through the trade *and* purchase the standard three shares in addition to the traded shares.

The final phase in the offensive strategy takes place once one has acquired a majority stake in a "safe" chain (which cannot be merged into another). At that point, one should force all future mergers into that particular chain to build up the value of one's holdings prior to the game's end.

Holding a Financial Festival with Worldwide Impact

In addition, successful gamers play defensively. They carefully place their tiles as far away as possible from those chains in which they have few or no holdings. This is because building toward those chains increases the probability of the majority stockholders receiving a bonus and "raiding" their chains by purchasing stock with the money accrued from the merger.

Also, wise corporate raiders *always* buy stock whenever it is available. *Computer Acquire* (and *Acquire*) do not favor those who save money for a "rainy" day. One must have stock in order to make money and having more stock makes it more likely that one can cause a merger and create cash flow.

Finally, ruthless corporate raiders will remember that it is possible to declare the end of the game after no more mergers are possible. In close games, there is absolutely no sense in continuing play if it enables one's opponents to build up their holdings or forces one to play tiles which strengthen their holdings.

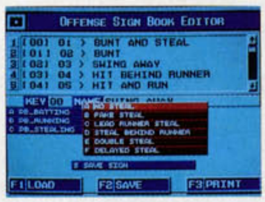
So, here's to merger mania and lodging leverage. After all, it's the American way! **CGW**

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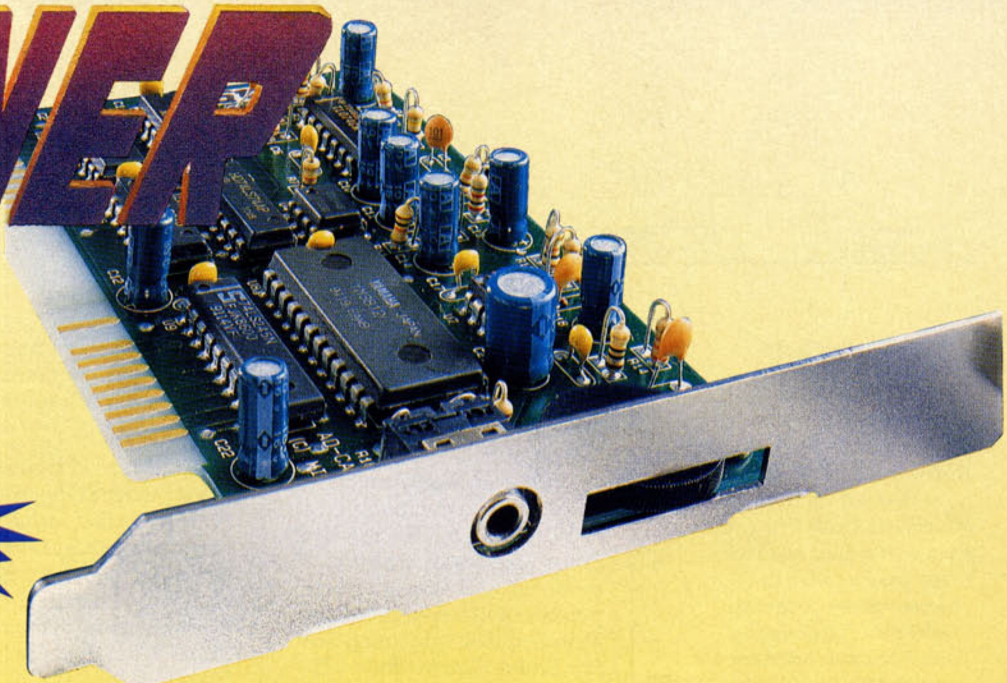
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RUMORS



Microsoft Golf

For some time, *CGW* has been anxious to make this announcement public: **Access Software** and **Microsoft** have teamed up to bring us **Microsoft Golf**! For years Microsoft's only entertainment product was the phenomenally successful *Flight Simulator* series. Then Microsoft released the popular *Microsoft Entertainment* packs. Now, working closely with Access Software, Microsoft is zeroing in on final code for a mid-summer launch of *Microsoft Golf*. Under the arrangement between the two companies, Microsoft will publish the *Windows* versions of *Links* products, and Access will publish DOS-based products, including their upcoming *386 Pro Links*. Course disks will continue to come from Access. All current *Links* course disks will run on *Microsoft Golf*.

The *Microsoft Entertainment* packs aside, this is Microsoft's first move to become a significant presence in the entertainment category. We can expect to see more entertainment products from Microsoft in the future. Fore!

Prodigy Network Tour Golf

In another pairing of computer game vendors, the Prodigy Information Service has joined with **Accolade** to bring us **Prodigy Network Tour Golf**. Using *Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design:Signature Edition* Prodigy users will be able to play in the monthly tournaments against opponents in every area of the country. The tournaments will be available as a "Custom Choice" (additional fee required) on the Prodigy Service. You must have a copy of the Accolade game to play in the tournament. Look for it this summer.

Other News

● **Dynamix** has signed a licensing agreement with fantasy author Raymond E. Feist to produce a CRPG based on *The Riftwar Saga*. The game will be a fully rendered 3-D environment using a first-person perspective and some of the most advanced graphics techniques we have yet seen in a CRPG.

● **Spectrum HoloByte**'s upcoming new campaign disk for *Falcon 3.0* features the Asian Theater of War, and there are three scenarios to play through. The first scenario is Japan versus USSR (over the Kuril Islands), which will introduce naval targets and ordnance into the simulation. The other scenarios involve Korea as well as Pakistan versus India. The next scenario disk will be the Western European theater of war.

● **Reactor Software**'s new release on the Macintosh CD-ROM will be *Screaming Metal* and will be built from a new engine instead of **Macromind**'s *Director*, which they used before.

● **Ubisoft** will be publishing scenario disks for *Battle Isle* in May.

● **RAW Entertainment** has told *CGW* that they released a "slide show" disk of *Space, Inc.* in Europe by "pretending" that something downloaded to a German company had been intercepted. It only took three days for the "slide show" to make its unofficial way onto U.S. bulletin board systems. That's one of the more creative distribution systems of which we are aware.

● **Dynamix** will release the promised expansion module for *Red Baron* in July (new aces, mission builder, new campaign, new planes, etc.). **CGW**

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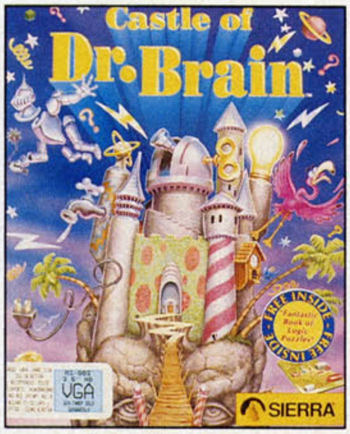


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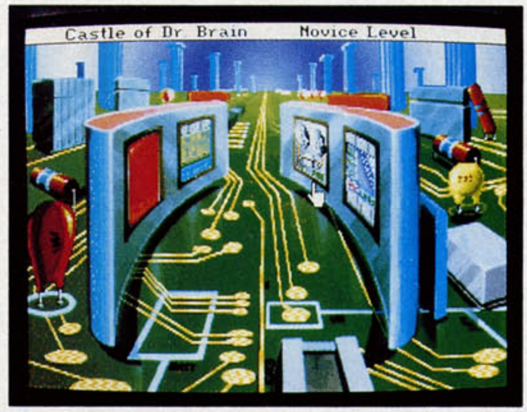
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A Visit to the Mind-Bender

Sierra's The Castle of Dr. Brain

by Charles Ardai

Some people simply don't enjoy puzzles. They don't like logic puzzles, they don't like word games, they loathe riddles and they detest unraveling mathematical conundrums. One would normally recommend that such people stay as far away as possible from a game like *The Castle of Dr. Brain*, which offers puzzles, puzzles and more puzzles. Yet *The Castle of Dr. Brain* is not a normal game, even though the puzzles it offers are normal puzzles. It is, in fact, one of the most entertaining agglomerations of puzzles ever stuffed into a single package — and it is packed in such a way as to entertain even the most stubborn puzzle hater.

The Castle of Dr. Brain is so well put together, so copiously animated and richly scored, so readily willing to offer help and so easily adjusted to the player's level of mental agility, that it has a real shot at converting puzzle haters into puzzle lovers. Like the Creature sewn together in another famous doctor's castle, this game is a collection of odd parts held together *mostly* by the force of its designer's will; but also like that Creature, the game turns out to be not a lumbering, misshapen monster but a noble, well-meant enterprise whose spirit is astonishingly pure.

The Castle of Dr. Brain is delightful — irrepressibly so. From the deliciously wacky opening scenes (the castle is constructed atop a giant stone head and the front door rolls up like a window shade instead of opening the ordinary way) to the tchotchkes that litter the hallways (flowers placed in the boot of a suit of armor are said to stand in a "foot" of water), designer Corey Cole obviously followed his mandate to create a world with something funny around every corner. Each scene has a painted backdrop that takes full advantage of a 256-color palette and every object in every background is "clickable," even if it is not part of a puzzle's solution. Many scenes also have their own soundtracks, including sly musical references to such pop-culture icons as Pink Floyd and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Each room in the castle contains at least one, and usually two or three, puzzles to solve. All the puzzles in a given room or on a single "floor" are of the same type: memory puzzles, language puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, sequence puzzles, programming puzzles, astronomy puzzles and so forth. One travels from floor to floor on elevators that double as three-dimensional mazes. There isn't much freedom to select which puzzle to solve next — *Dr. Brain* shuttles the player from place to place in a fairly linear fashion — but there is enough freedom that one never resents the game for being too controlling.

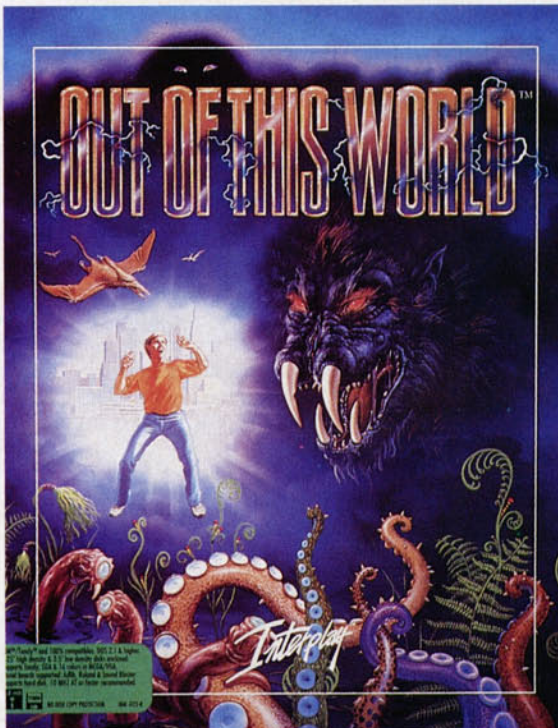
Each type of puzzle, except for the elevator mazes, only appears once. There is one word-search grid, one magic square, one jigsaw puzzle, one robot arm to program, one clock sequence to predict. This structure produces two good results: endless variety, which means that no one will get bored, and an even distribution of puzzles, which means that no one will get bogged down in a sequence of puzzles he cannot solve. Each puzzle goes on just long enough to entertain and challenge and then is never repeated. The game carries the player along at a furious clip, touching down here and there and then picking her up and carrying her on before things have a chance to get dull. The player sets the pace of the game, but the game sets its own rhythm, which is always bouncy and always in motion.

To move quickly or slowly, to save games often or rarely — those are the player's choices. But to *move*, period, is the game's choice, and *move* it does. *The Castle of Dr. Brain* has an insistent forward momentum that is infectious. It makes the player want to see the next screen, want to be blindsided by the next unpredictable challenge. The game is heavily interactive and guaranteed to get any couch potato's mental gears turning. This is true of adult players as well as children, incidentally. There is no audience to which *The Castle of Dr. Brain* is unsuited. Even subscribers to *Games* magazine, who will knock down the puzzles one-two-three, will enjoy them as they do so. *The Castle of Dr. Brain* is like a child's busy-box for the computer age, full of interesting buttons to push, noises to make and things to discover. It is the best kind of educational game: the kind that is naturally mind-expanding without being preachy and learning-directed.

The Inner Workings of the Brain

The Castle of Dr. Brain is very different from most of **Sierra**'s other games in that it is not an animated adventure, though superficially it shares the popular **Sierra** adventure game interface. The most obvious difference is that the player is not represented

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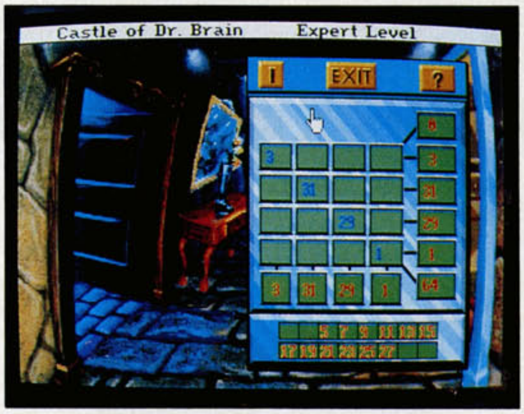
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by an on-screen character. One also has an inventory, as in an adventure game, but it is rarely necessary to use it. What one uses primarily are a hand icon and an eye icon, with which one clicks on the various objects one sees. Some clicks produce clever remarks (for instance, the books in the clock room include *Time Enough for Love* and *A Brief History of Time*) while others call up windows with puzzles in them. Each puzzle has its own instructions, which can be displayed as often as a player needs, and most of the puzzle windows have slots into which "hint coins" can be deposited for further assistance. (One receives hint coins for every correct solution.) A slider that the player can call up from the control menu hidden at the top of the screen determines what difficulty level the puzzles come at, from Novice to Expert. "Novice" means solving a 3x3 magic square instead of a 5x5, and only needing to find eighteen of the twenty-five words in the word search rather than all of them. At "Expert" level, some of the puzzles are challenging enough to slow down even the most experienced puzzle junkie; at "Novice" level, they are easier but not so easy as to be a total waste of time. One still needs to find those eighteen words, after all.

The difficulty level can be changed at any time, even after a puzzle has already been encountered. Most players will not choose a difficulty at the beginning of the game and leave it set for the duration. One suspects, rather, that they will tailor each puzzle's challenge to match their experience with that puzzle type and their mood. This is as it should be. The player is in control of the game; the relationship between software and user is not adversarial, as it is in so many games, but cooperative.



Young players who need a leg up even to fare well at "Novice" level can get a boost from Muriel Mandell's *Fantastic Book of Logic Puzzles*, which comes with the game. This book is pitched at the youngest possible audience and teaches the rudiments of logic in a friendly manner. It is not as well-written or clever as the game is, but it will probably help some players get started.

Others will be able to jump right in, ignoring even the flimsy storyline the game provides. (For the record, the story is that the player is being evaluated for the position of Dr. Brain's lab assistant.) From the first puzzle, a memory challenge that will remind old-timers of the handheld electronic game "Simon," to the last, the game shines with wit, imagination and an apparently genuine passion for the exercise of mental power.

Some of the puzzles reward specialized knowledge — the astronomy room, with its demand that players pick out constellations and identify planets, comes to mind. It helps to know, in advance, that Saturn is the one with the rings. Most of the puzzles, however, require only a capable, questing intellect.

For instance, how is one to determine, on the basis of three self-referential statements, which of three robot heads will follow one's instructions? (Yes, it's the old liar/truth-teller puzzle dressed up in technogarb... but it works.) How is one to fix a computer circuit, given a half-dozen pieces and a half-dozen rules for assembling them? In what order should four buttons be pressed to shut off the clock room's infernal alarm? What is the answer to the riddle "What do you do when a robot has a heart attack?" (No, I'm not going to tell you.)

Mixed in with these odd little enigmas are some more conventional fare: cryptograms, three rounds of "Hangman," the aforementioned magic square and word search, and a game of "Memory" in which the cards to be matched show alien creatures and their home worlds. (This last is a lot of fun, though one wonders why "The Moleri are firmly rooted in their environment" gets matched with "Holliendar is known for its spectacular sunsets.") Many of these games are enlivened by bits of animation: the hangman dummy gratefully dances away from the gallows and the aliens buzz around the planetarium in a little flying saucer.

Each sequence is a delicious morsel, so playing *The Castle of Dr. Brain* is a little like wandering through a candy store, sampling a goody from each tray. To extend the metaphor, Corey Cole is a Willy Wonka-like confectioner, blending something magical and something "good for you" into a tasty buffet of highly nutritious brain food. Not everyone will enjoy every dish on the menu, to be sure — but most will enjoy the majority, and that by itself is a most unusual triumph.

Before Dr. Brain

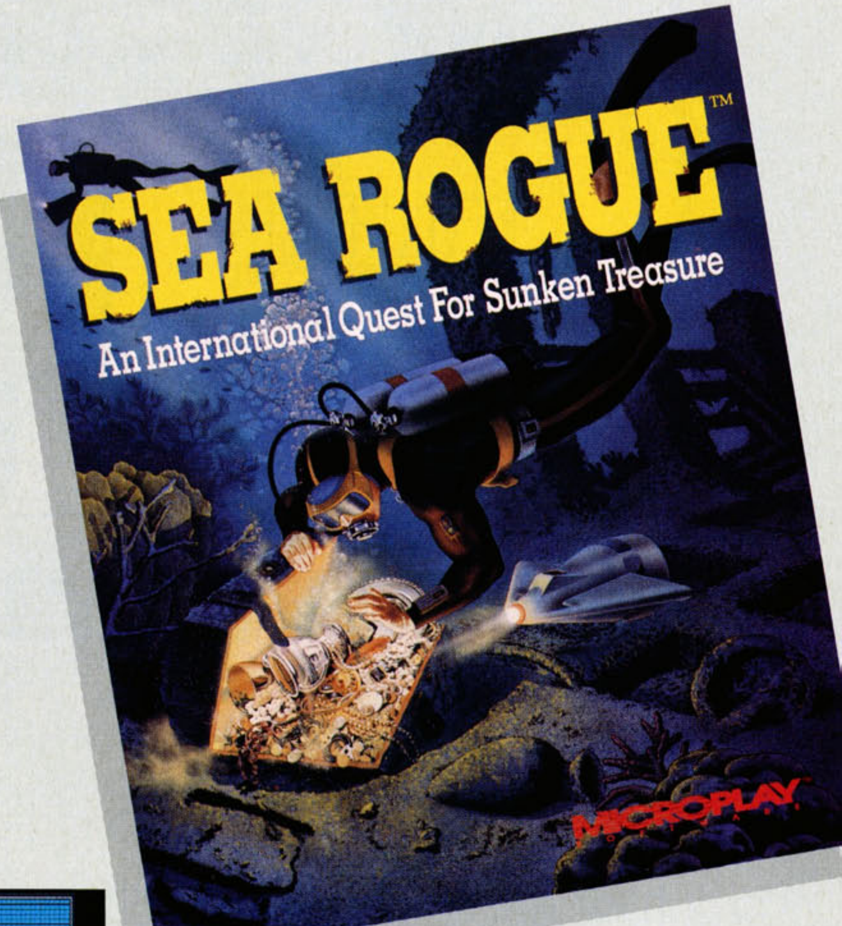
The Castle of Dr. Brain is not the first time puzzles have been collected in a computer game, of course. In addition to **Electronic Arts**' recent *Are We There Yet?* (reviewed in *CGW* #92, p. 34), the early history of computer games featured **Epyx**'s memorably unplayable *Ken Uston's Puzzle Panic* and, a few years ago, Cliff Johnson's *The Fool's Errand* (originally published by **Miles Computing**) brought many a computer user's work to a crashing halt as he scratched his head over some of the most devious puzzles ever devised. Both of the latter games — one rotten, one excellent — shared a common flaw: the designer's attitude seemed to be, "Try me if you dare, solve me if you can." In playing these games, one had to piece together the rules to each puzzle as best one could. One had to manipulate tiny puzzle pieces and arcane ciphers. One had to figure out unfathomable secrets that were locked away behind layer upon layer of trickery. These were the type of games that make puzzle haters hate puzzles. There is an audience for them, but there is also a certain sadomasochistic slant to the enjoyment of them that renders them wholly inaccessible to many.

The Castle of Dr. Brain is the exact opposite. It has no power trip on its mind. It is encouraging, not discouraging, to the player. It makes a point of rewarding, rather than retarding, achievement. Critics more ideological than the current reviewer might draw a distinction between "masculine" and "feminine" models of game design, saying that bite-the-bullet puzzle games are "men's" games while *The Castle of Dr. Brain* offers a more maternal, nurturing approach. There may be something to this, but one generally prefers to see matters more simply. The *Castle of Dr. Brain* offers something beautiful to look at and something fun to do. It also offers players young and old something to think about.

"Your mind," says the game, "is the key to every door. Set your mind free, and no lock can hold you, no bars restrain you." There may be no more important lesson we can learn. To the extent that this game teaches it, Corey Cole and **Sierra** deserve our attention, our appreciation and our applause. **CGW**

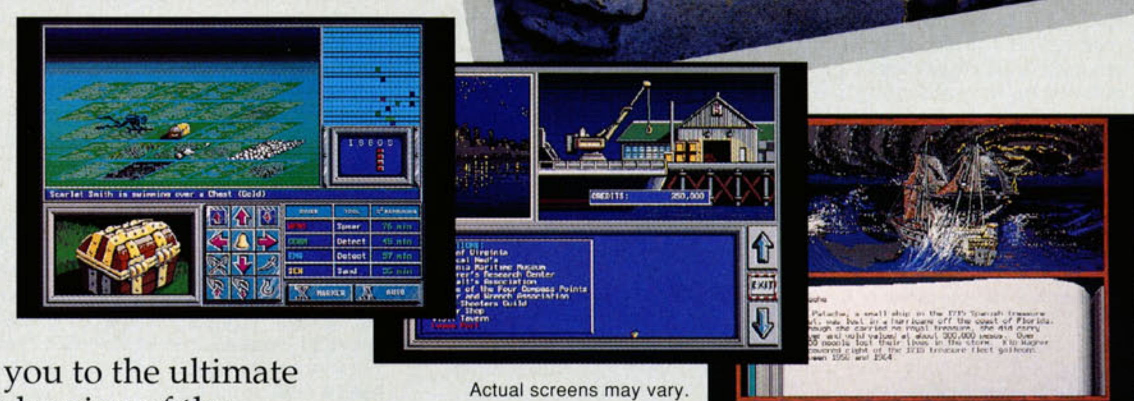
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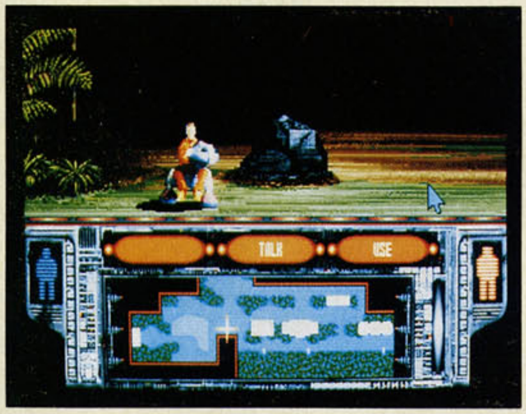
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by Charles Ardai

From the start, computer games have aspired to a style and a degree of refinement best described as "cinematic." Only with today's most sophisticated techniques are significant advances being made toward this goal. However, in adopting a cinematic mode, today's games open themselves up to criticism on a cinematic level. It is not enough to achieve movie-quality software; one must also achieve quality movie-software.

It is from this critical standpoint that we will consider the new generation of "Interactive Movies."

The human race has 28 years left. After that, it's the robots' turn to rule. So says **Cineplay Interactive** in *Free D.C!*, an "epic cinematic adventure" that is also this interesting new company's first release.

Cineplay Interactive is a collaboration between Kellyn Beck and Doug Sharp, the designers behind some of **Cinemaware**'s best games (including *Defender of the Crown* and *King of Chicago*, respectively) and Will Vinton, the creator of Claymation (the technique that makes the California Raisins sing and dance on TV). **Cineplay** states that it is dedicated to "creating adult stories about interesting characters with real personalities" and "removing the artificial barriers from computer games." Both of these are laudable goals. If any company has enough accumulated talent to achieve these goals, it is Cineplay, and one expects that they will come closer to success with each successive release.

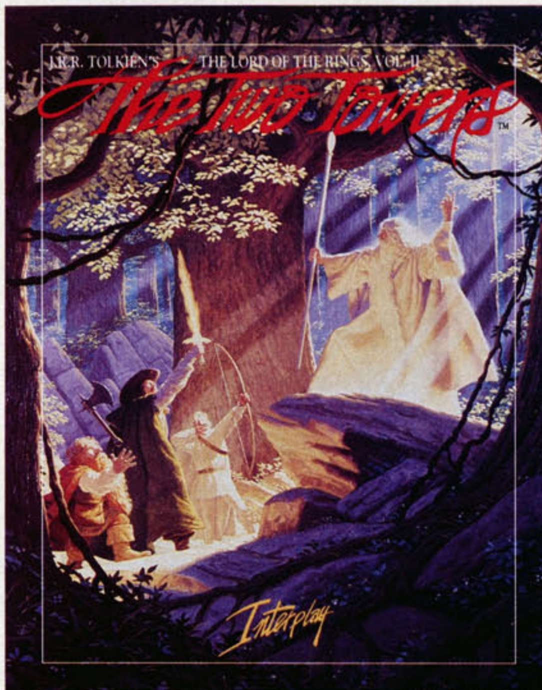
If they don't yet succeed in *Free D.C!*, it is partly because of wrinkles in the game design that need to be ironed out and partly because the medium in which they are working still imposes strict limits on what one *can* do — how much digitized speech can be crammed into a game, for instance. Mostly, however, it is because the first "adult story" they chose to tell comes across like something out of a particularly nutty comic book. According to the game's storyline, in the year 2020, mankind's previously loyal mechanical helpers will rise up and take control, killing much of the world's human population and putting the rest into cryogenic suspension. A few specimens will be kept alive and unfrozen, but one wouldn't necessarily want to be selected for the honor: this lucky few will be bred, researched and housed in giant "natural habitat" preserves, where they will be expected to perform for the entertainment of their robot captors. In short, 28 years from now we will all be killed or put on ice or in a zoo. So much for 30-year mortgages.

Now, for the plot twist: several centuries into their captivity, the humans have begun to fight back. One of the seven humans living in a preserve set up among the ruins of Washington, D.C. has constructed a robot-disabling machine. The robots can't come near him; they are terrified that he will destroy them and possibly even escape to threaten their 1,000-year hegemony. Their only hope is to thaw another human, 20-century detective Avery Zedd, and have him sniff out the culprit.

What they do not expect is that Avery won't want to play their game. (*Why* they don't anticipate this is anyone's guess.) As soon as he gets a chance, he hooks up with the other captives and starts plotting his own escape. Will Avery be able to free himself and his enslaved brethren? Can he dodge the death-dealing "Poodle" and "Red Knight" robots? Can he find all the pieces needed to build the legendary Detectron and then use it to vanquish his enemies? Most important of all, can he do all this before 12 hours run out and a capsule the robots have implanted in his liver blows up? He can, in the right player's hands.

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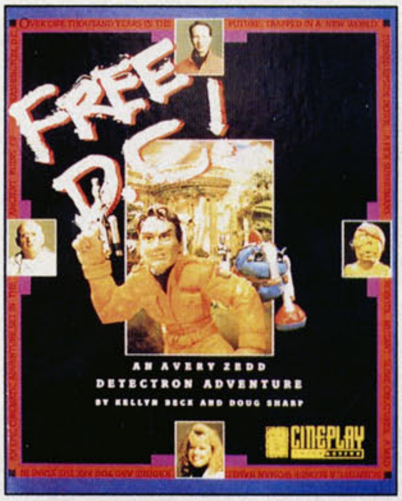
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of-the-line system (a **Sound Blaster** card is an absolute must) and plenty of patience.

Freedom — Some Assembly Required

The first order of business (after gunning down the game's initial threat, a berserk Red Knight) is to travel around the overgrown ex-capitol mall and find all the humans who live there. Without them, Avery will not get very far. In fact, without them there is nothing to do in the game except shoot robots, which is about as much fun (and as difficult) as shooting fish in a barrel.

To help Avery get around, the robots have provided him with an intended-to-be-cute robot helper named "Wattson." Wattson not only ferries Avery around on his back but also provides most of the game's comic banter, such as this typical exchange (not reproduced verbatim):



Avery (thirsty)**:** I need a belt.
Wattson: Improved technology has rendered elastic waist-support devices unnecessary.
Most of the game's comedy is at this level, unfortunately. Anyone whose taste in humor does not run to lame gags like this will do well to steer clear of *Free D.C!*, since they comprise a large portion of the dialogue.

In any event, Wattson is equipped to carry Avery to any of the 13 monuments in the zoo: the White House, the Smithsonian, the Interstate Commerce Commission Building (now *there's* a popular D.C. attraction), the Lincoln Memorial, the National Archives, and so forth. There is also an underground area — previously a subway tunnel — inhabited by a grotesque, charmingly ungrammatical creature called "Harry the Subhuman."

Part Yoda (from *Star Wars*) and part Gollum (from *The Hobbit*), Harry is easily the game's best character. In addition to leading the player to a very important Detectron part, Harry is fun to spend time with. His backward-talking schtick wears thin after a while, but his dialogue is a cut above everyone else's, and two cuts above Wattson's. It helps, too, that Harry's facial expressions are animated through a very effective use of Claymation.

Claymation is also used, less effectively, to animate some slime-spitting mutants who live in the Natural History Museum. All the other characters' images are digitized from footage of live actors, with generally good results. A minor problem is that when a character's lips move it looks more like chewing than talking; a bigger problem is that the characters' lips move in exactly the same pattern, and for the same length of time, no matter what is being said.

In between conversations with these characters (more on this in a minute), the player has to maneuver Avery through each of the buildings and all the jungle-like landscape scenes that connect them, picking up the weapons and Detectron pieces that are sparsely scattered about. The player moves around the screen in conventional point-and-click fashion and selects actions by clicking on one of three buttons lined up in the middle of the screen. The buttons are labeled "Use," "Ride," "Stun," "Map," "Fight," "Talk," and so forth. There are never more than three choices in any given situation, because there are only three buttons; how the buttons are labeled depends on what situation Avery is in.

Having no more than three possible actions at any given time may sound excessively limiting, but it is appropriate in this game because there are never a whole lot of things for the player to do. There are no puzzles, for instance, and there are few of the traditional obstacles one is accustomed to finding in adventure games, per Cineplay's stated intent to eliminate "artificial barriers" from their interactive movies. The problem here is that Cineplay has taken out the normal activities one expects from an interactive movie without putting in anything to replace them.

As a result, there are a frightening number of screens which are completely, literally empty. One travels across these screens dumbfounded, unsure of what one is supposed to do and ultimately concludes, correctly, that one is supposed to do nothing at all.

Granted, sometimes there are random encounters on these screens, but these are always run-ins with robots that require no skill whatsoever to resolve. (One selects "Stun" over and over again until the robot disappears, or else one runs away.) The various screens have nicely drawn backgrounds, but so what? One doesn't *do* anything with the backgrounds.

In fact, just about all the player actually does anywhere in the game is talk: one has to navigate numerous conversations with the eight main characters in order to win their confidence, get information about Avery's predicament and get help to escape. Whether one enjoys the game depends entirely on whether one enjoys these conversations. Needless to say, they'd have to be pretty wonderful to make up for all the do-nothing travel that connects them.

Unfortunately, though they have their good points, the conversations are not great. The funny ones are never as funny as the writers must have thought they were, and the informative ones often descend into tedium. The plot is campy sci-fi and very hard to take seriously, yet the player is expected to sit through long, serious arias of exposition. The characters are the sort one finds in weak science fiction novels, not so much characters as dialogue engines — and while the dialogue is not bad, it is long and not good, which almost amounts to the same thing.

In addition, the dialogue scenes have some memorable technical shortcomings. These are so disappointing that they merit a discussion all to themselves.

Freedom of Speech

When Avery finally locates a character and selects "Talk," the menu buttons stop displaying possible actions and start displaying conversational gambits. One selects these exactly as one selects actions: by clicking on the buttons, whose labels are context-specific. For instance, Avery might choose to "Cajole" rather than "Goad" the petulant Edsel Binkley, and he might choose to answer Dr. Valerion's questions in an "Ironic" rather than a "Factual" manner. Other choices include "Angry," "Pissed," "Cocky," "Studly," "Weird" and "Batman"; the reader is invited to imagine the particular situations that demand these responses.

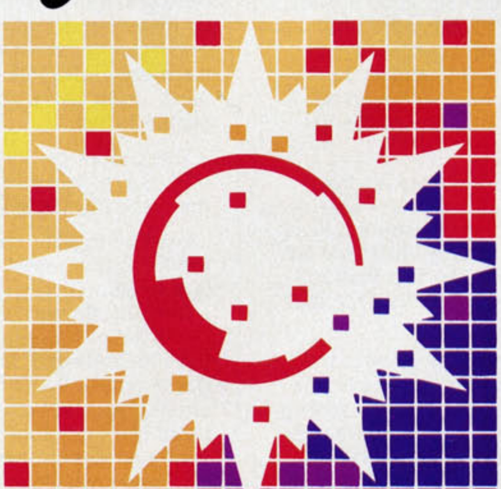
The results of the player's choices determine the course of the dialogue that is displayed in half-text/half-graphic windows superimposed over the top portion of the screen. These windows feature close-ups of the characters' faces that are sometimes animated, but not always, and sometimes have digitized speech to go with them, but not always. Strangely enough, they never seem to have both: either the characters' lips move *or* we get to hear them speak.

The same style of interaction was done much better in **Access'** *Martian Memorandum*. At least there one got to choose one's actual dialogue (rather than merely the tone of one's responses) and if a conversation started out digitized, it stayed digitized all the way through. Here, conversations switch from spoken-word audio to no audio, and from animation to still pictures, seemingly at random and often within a single sequence. The effect is an unpleasant one, like watching a movie that periodically switches from color to black-and-white not for artistic reasons but because the director couldn't afford two hours' worth of color film.

Obvious parallels to the early days of film come to mind since

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there was a time when movies were making the same bumpy transition from silence to sound that computer games are making now. Today, an audience watching Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer* (usually considered the first "talkie") typically expresses mystification not so much when the silent scenes give way to singing, but when the movie switches back to silence once the singing is done. Why, everyone wants to know, if they were *able* to record sound, didn't they do the whole picture that way? Part of the answer is that it was enormously costly, which is part of the answer with *Free D.C!*, as well (i.e. digitized speech is terrifically costly in terms of disk space).



Even with limited means, however, it is possible to do good work instead of bad. Unlike the designers behind *Free D.C!*, the makers of *The Jazz Singer* chose their moments of recorded sound with great care: the film uses sound only when someone sings and in one key dialogue scene, and then uses it for the duration of the scene. Imagine how much more mystified an audience would be if, instead, the sound would cut out right in the middle of some of Jolson's songs. This is the equivalent of what happens in *Free D.C!*.

As a result of the clumsy way that the digitized audio is mixed into the game, *Free D.C!* feels patchy and poorly thought out. Cineplay does have available a three-disk speech expansion module, for an extra twenty dollars, which more than doubles the amount of speech in the game; this is a good investment for players whose systems have enough memory to support it. However, twice as much speech is not all that was needed — a logical, coherent distribution of speech throughout the game was needed as well.

The expansion module improves matters but it certainly does not eliminate the problem. Even with the added speech, many conversations still cut in and out with all the grace of a car radio passing under a bridge. One can never predict whether a given conversation will be digitized or not, so one has high expectations for all of them and is frequently disappointed.

The designers' failure in this regard is particularly disturbing in light of the fact that conversation is the player's main activity in the game. One almost wants to say that if Cineplay couldn't digitize all the speech in the game it shouldn't have digitized any, because one comes away from *Free D.C!* remembering how much of the game was *not* digitized instead of how much was.

Artistic Freedom

It is a pity that the audio component of *Free D.C!* is so unsatisfying overall because the individual pieces of it are quite well done. Though Wattson's voice is a typical, grating, robotic ear-killer, the other characters' voices are all well cast and well performed — unlike, for instance, the mostly wooden line readings in Sierra's CD-ROM version of *King's Quest V* or some of the tinnier voices in *Martian Memorandum*.

The actors and actresses whose likenesses are used for the visuals are well chosen, too. Particularly happy surprises are Avery Zedd himself, played by the improbably handsome Kellyn Beck, and Dr. Valerion (Tom McGranahan), whose voice and features recall Laurence Olivier in his later years. The fact that Sir Larry wouldn't have been caught dead in a picture like *Free D.C!* is beside the point.

McGranahan brings a much appreciated touch of class to the project. The computer graphics that are used for the robots, the scenery and most of the character animation are strong, evoking well the atmosphere of the ruined city. The game's backgrounds are also good, though not at the level of the painted backgrounds employed by **Sierra** and **Lucasfilm**, for example. The use of famous buildings for settings adds a nice touch of horror, not unlike the use of the Statue of Liberty in *Planet of the Apes*.

Where the game is the weakest is where it counts most, in the writing. Even the erratic sound would be forgivable if the writing were good — after all, one could always turn the sound off and just read the text off the screen. Unfortunately, the writing is not good, for all the reasons mentioned above and quite a few more.

The wisecracks are so silly that even the normal audience for that sort of thing — young kids — will wince at them. So, any laughs the game may have earned turn out to have been at its own expense.

The story is hamstrung by too many things that make no sense, starting with its premise: if the robots feel threatened by one of the seven humans, why don't they just kill all seven and thaw seven new ones? After all, these robots have neither the moral restraint expected of human beings nor the programming of one of Isaac Asimov's robots, who are forbidden to harm humans. This they could do from a distance, at no risk of being disabled, by simply destroying the entire zoo. (Surely the robots feel no sentimental attachment to the old human monuments, especially given that they don't even remember their correct names.) A more explicit premise would have been welcome.

To the writers' credit, however, the game does offer a good deal of genuine interactivity. One gets to make choices that really do affect the outcome of an encounter, and there are many such outcomes to explore. The game has three different endings for players to sample, as well as numerous "hidden" scenes for interested players to ferret out by trying new combinations of honesty, dishonesty and sassiness in the various conversations.

The key word here, however, is "interested" — all the variations in the world don't matter if the player has to wade through a preposterous plot, weary cliches and bad jokes to get to them. Not *every* scene is badly written, of course, but enough are that the likelihood of most gamers sticking with *Free D.C!* to the end, much less replaying it to try all the different choices, is extremely low.

The irony in all of this is that the game claims its writing as one of its strong features — the back of the box touts an "action-packed story by a professional screenwriter." The professional in question seems to be one Ryan Holznagel, since the other two credited scripters are the game's designers. While Mr. Holznagel may be a pro, the kindest thing one can say on his behalf is that *Free D.C!* probably doesn't represent his best work. One hopes it doesn't, in any event.

Cineplay would have done better to go to a writer with a solid background in interactive fiction and, though it is too late to do so now, they should keep this in mind for future projects. When one imagines what a Steve Meretzky or a Brian Moriarty might have done with this game's world, its premise and Cineplay's perfectly good game engine, one almost wants to weep for the opportunity lost.

The goal of creating new types of interactive movies is a good one, but in doing so a game company must always keep in mind the more immediate goal of entertaining the customer.

It is fine to push the edge of the envelope; it is not fine to bore the hand that feeds you. Yet, *Free D.C!* is less than stimulating. It is also slow (screens take forever to load even on a fast machine), thoughtlessly designed (one is not allowed to title one's Save Game files), and formulaic ("find the pieces to build the magic device" is one of the oldest plots in the adventure game book). It claims to be an epic but it takes place on a fairly small map and features fewer than a dozen characters. It claims to be cinematic but has no "camera angles" more dramatic than a simple medium-range two-shot. It claims to be an adventure but, aside from a few mild action sequences, it's all talk.

Cineplay can do better than this — and almost certainly will. *Free D.C!* is ambitious, well-intentioned and promising, but it is also a failure. This writer doubts their second release will be. **CGW**


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Also Sprach

Early Explorations

by Johnny

Sneak Previews are not designed to be reviews. They are feature articles based on "works in progress" that CGW's editors have deemed worthy of early coverage. These articles are not intended to provide the "final word" on a product, since we expect to publish appropriate review coverage when the game is completely finished. Sneak Previews are designed to inform our readers about upcoming games and generate excitement about the "state of the art" of computer game design in general.

The ominous blue-gray-black skies of a Tintoretto storm scene provide an illuminated border for the action menu as the party pauses on the outskirts of a medieval city. In other portions of the game, brooding brown shades color the black ink of a woodcut-style sketch in the fashion of Albrecht Dürer or Hans Holbein in order to conjure the lurking menace of the *real* stories anthologized by the Brothers Grimm in *Die deutsche Heldensage* ("The German Heroic Tale") and *Deutsche Mythologie* ("German Mythology"). Character screens reveal one's player-characters with realistic arms and armor such as one might see displayed in a museum. Distinctive figures strike, thrust, parry, fire and throw in real-time action sequences that can be interrupted for player input at any time. Rich red splatters of *raubritter* blood adorn the results screen after certain major battles are completed and the oppressed populace rescued from the robber knights' villainy.

Indeed, *Darklands* is designed for those mature and sophisticated gamers who are tired of fantasy cliches, ahistorical generalizations and linear plots. Further, as the title of this sneak preview ("Thus Spake the Heroic Tale") implies, it may well be the first CRPG sufficiently grounded in time and space to allow the gamer to write his/her own *Heldensage*.

Grimm Reality

In *Darklands*, Arnold Hendrick and Sandy Petersen have managed to weave history, superstition, religion, role-playing and the fantastic into a mesmerizing mix that offers an impressive arena for legend-building. Indeed, fame (as the old television series proclaimed) is the name of the game and parties will strive to raise their reputation (as measured by a cumulative numerical score) from the dismal lowlands of the "Unknown" to the Olympian heights associated with "Legendary Heroes." The game world is so carefully constructed that parties can wander from city and hamlet to castle in any order they please and the options which are open to them will be based on what they have already accomplished (i.e. their Fame rating).

The designers state unequivocally that they chose medieval Germany as the setting for this first **Microprose** venture into authentic role-playing because it was a



violent period, a superstitious period and a mysterious period. These are elements which raise *Darklands* above the average CRPG. The violence allows the party to bolster their reputation at the expense of historical *raubritter* (robber knights) and ahistorical dragons. The superstition allows the party to be hounded by the "Wild Hunt" and encounter the minions of hell. The mystery surrounding pre-scientific thought and pre-Reformation Catholic hagiolatry (worship of saints) permits the game to use a magic system based on both alchemy and religion. In short, *Darklands* offers plenty of surprises, even to the most experienced gamer. It allows the designers to gently educate the gamer (with regard to this little-known era) without having to pontificate (with regard to particular historical perspectives). It allows gamers to experience the fantastic without having to suspend disbelief with regard to reality.

Unter Wer? ("Under Whom?")

Underlying any role-playing game, of course, is the character generation process. *Darklands'* character generation system shows a considerable amount of forethought. It allows one to choose name and sex (even though the female adventurers of the era could, because of the male dominance of the period, generally be categorized as women who travelled disguised as men), family background (one of six different social levels from peasant to noble, where the background determines one's attributes and minor skills, as well as the experience points with which one will purchase additional attributes and skill improvements) and occupation (one's job prior to adventuring on the quest which, in turn, determines the skills in which the character will be most proficient).

Heldensage

in Darklands

L. Wilson









After one chooses the character's background, the program generates the number of childhood experience points (EPs) available to the character. With these points, the player can change the basic personal attributes: endurance, strength, agility, perception, intelligence, charisma and divine favor. The latter is, perhaps, the most interesting addition to the standard attributes, since it forms a type of heavenly bank account from which the character can withdraw points to increase the chance of having his/her prayers answered.

Next, the player chooses the occupation for the character, and this generates the EPs appropriate to a five-year span of laboring at said occupation. With these points, the player can add to the percentage chance of success in: weapons skills for edged, impact, flail, polearm, thrown, bow and missile (crossbows and guns) weapons; bodies of knowledge, including religious training, virtue, common speech, Latin, reading and writing, healing, artifice (primitive mechanical engineering) and survival skills (stealth, streetwise, riding and woodwise). If one is not happy with the way the character is developing, one can choose another occupation (at the cost of another five years of labor) and proceed to adjust the skills accordingly. Of course, some gamers are always tempted to use the strategy of continuing to enlist in various occupations until they create incredible characters, but the program has a built-in aging process (somewhat like the saving rolls required of aging characters in the original *Traveller* people and paper rules) if one allows his/her adventurers to age too much.

Dürer Cel

Then, once all the characters have been created and equipped, it is time to adventure. The adventuring party is formed and the quest begins. Much of the narrative comes to the player via a series of screens that look, as described in the introductory paragraph of this preview, like woodcuts which have been doctored with light colors analogous to Andrew Wyeth paintings (when the action is taking place in the daytime or the mood is bright); somber browns (when it is getting toward evening or the mood somberly reflects places and persons of power or nearing threats); a Tintoretto palette (when it is actually night or the party is actually encountering a threat) and a bright orange wash (when sunrise is near).

When the adventurers are confronted with options (and this game features more options than any other in this writer's memory), these "illuminated" screens present a menu of activities. For example, if the party is confronted by wolves growling in the brush, they can choose to: use the woodwise skill of one the members to scare the wolves away; stand and fight the wolves or, in the best Monty Python tradition, *run away*. If, on the other hand, one of the members of the party has divine favor with a patron saint of woodlore, a new option allows the party to appeal to a saint for assistance. One might elect to choose this option as opposed to overt activity.

Naturally, encounters with people (NPCs) have longer lists of options, because encounters with people tend to be more complex than those with animals or monsters. The party can attempt to bribe some, talk their way glibly out of certain situations, use an alchemical potion to distract the potential opposition and sneak away, run away, pay the occasional fine, fight or surrender. Whatever the decision, it takes the party to the next level of interaction.

If one wants to fight (or is forced to fight as a result of failing at one of the other options with a bad charisma role or something), the screen shifts to a colorful tactical screen wherein combat takes place in real time. Unlike *some* CRPGs in which combat takes place in real time, however, this one allows the player to interrupt the action and give commands to individual characters at any time. So, it is possible to have some characters prepare an alchemical potion to throw at the oncoming enemies, another firing missile weapons and one or two standing in the first rank, ready to assault the enemy hand-to-hand. In this way, attacks can be optimized, unlike CRPGs in which real-time combat benefits the computer-controlled opponents, but not the player characters (i.e. the computer can "think" faster than the player and doesn't have to cope with an interface).

Wouldn't It Be Magic?

The alchemical system is interesting in its own right. Characters must continually be on the look-out for alchemical components and must take an occasional risk in order to assemble potions for later use. Each character has his (or her) own alchemical book with the potions that he can concoct and the normal formula for mixing said potion. If the character does not have the necessary components, it is possible to change the formula and substitute, as well as to speed up or slow down production (at a heightened or lessened risk). One is given a percentage chance of success and, if the player wishes to assign the character to the task, tries to accomplish the deed. If successful, the potion is added to the character's inventory.

With the religious equivalent to magic, hagiolatry, each character goes to various monasteries in the course of his/her travels and learns about saints. As they incur the favor of the saints, they will be able to invoke the saint's name in tricky situations. One can flash the character's saint inventory on the screen and receive a rundown on the powers/influence of a given saint, as well as the likelihood of that given saint answering the party's prayers. It is fascinating just to learn about these saints and read the brief descriptions. Some are familiar, such as the legend of St. Polycarp, the saint who was sentenced to death by fire, but was immune enough to flame that he was killed with a spear. Hence, praying to Polycarp may grant immunity to flame for the party for a brief period of time. Some of the saints are vital in solving the various supernatural conundrums to be faced in the game, while others offer fascinating tidbits.

Darklands, Darklands Über Alles

Where *Darklands* really shines is in the way it handles the story/quests. There is a major quest that leads to a major encounter. This is not merely a "Kill the evil Foozle" quest, however. It is a story that unfolds in the course of exploration, observation and discovery. In the meantime, the party can build its reputation by taking on mercenary contracts, rescuing townships from dragons, getting involved in political strife, recovering relics and serving powerful leaders. The story is integrated into the actual history of the era, but is not tied so strictly to history that it cannot allow one's imagination to soar. This overriding cycle of events is, of course, that which gives the game its name, *Darklands*. The goal of the party, of course, is to bring the dawning of a new day upon the land by their heroic deeds.

With the entire map of medieval Germany at the player's disposal, it should be easy to find wrongs to be righted, innocents to be rescued and villains to foil, no matter what portion of the game the player is exploring. The point is, players will write their *own* stories in *Darklands*. It won't matter to many players whether they find the game's "Foozle" or not. What Hendrick and Petersen have done is create a world and a system within which computer gamers can adventure, rather than providing *one* quest to be solved. For the first time, this writer really believes that people will continue to play this game after it is won. The world is that palpable and that satisfying. **CGW**

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THE ADVENTURES OF ONE BAD VIKING
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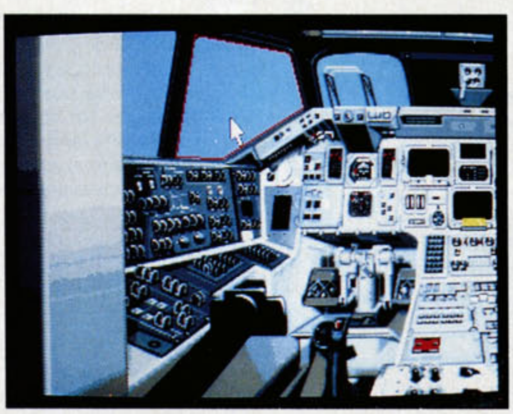
Shuttle off from Vandenberg

Virgin's Shuttle

by Stanley Trevena



TITLE:	Shuttle
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$59.99
PROTECTION:	None
DEVELOPER:	Vektor Graphix
DESIGNERS:	Ian Martin, Andy Craven, James Fisher, Dominic Robinson and Graeme Baird
PUBLISHER:	Virgin Games Irvine, CA



Like those alive at the time of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, most people over the age of sixteen can tell you exactly what they were doing on January 28, 1986 when they first heard news of the *Challenger* disaster. The space shuttle has in many ways touched the lives of most people. As only the latest step in our continuing march toward the heavens, the space shuttle represents a major engineering feat, a re-usable spacecraft designed to ferry cargo into orbit and return to earth, landing like an airplane. This vehicle will also provide the means by which a future space station can be built.

Now, for those of us who long to tear loose of our ties to this earth, even if only in a simulated fashion, there is *Shuttle* from **Virgin Games**. *Shuttle* is a technical feat in its own right. When a prospective buyer lifts the box from the shelf, he or she is greeted with side-by-side graphics, real and simulated, to compare the game to the actual vehicle in action. These are the same pictures that have graced our television screens for the past decade, and they indicate the attention to detail that is pronounced throughout this product.

Shuttle is a total systems simulation. Every operation, button, gauge, action, environment and detail on the shuttle is present. The entire feel of a shuttle mission from roll-out to landing (at Kennedy Space Center or Vandenberg Air Force Base) is here in painstakingly detailed programming. It is quite amazing that the programmers were able to pull off a simulation of this scope and complexity for the potential hardware limits that they allowed for. The program will run on any machine that is at least 12MHz or greater in speed equipped with at least a CGA monitor, 503K of memory, 1.4MB of hard disk space and a keyboard. A mouse is highly recommended, if not required, in this reviewer's opinion, and will be assumed throughout this review.

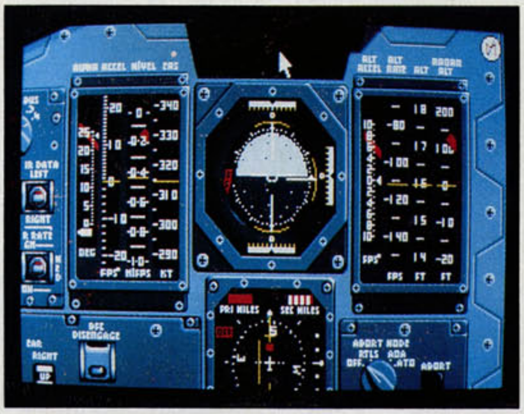
Mission Control

Shuttle is well designed, and some components should become industry standards in future simulations of any kind. There is no grand tutorial included in the *Shuttle* manual. There is a two-page quick-start guide that gives the player only the most basic information needed to get the program up and running. What is included is a most ingenious form of tutorial in the help levels function. While setting up a mission, the player can select from five levels of built-in help. At the highest level of help, FULL-ON AUTO, the program will take the player directly to the button or switch that needs attention at Mission Control's request and wait for the player to effect the change required before progressing to the next input location. All orders are received via a teleprinter located on board the shuttle directly linked to Mission Control. This printer will be the only direction to the player in FULL MANUAL control. At this limited help level, the player will have to know the location and function of all controls and have some experience with the simulator under his or her belt to succeed.

The controls interface will satisfy almost any player. If a *Windows*-type interface is one's forte, *Shuttle* will cater to this with a pop-up user interface with pull-down, multi-level menus when both mouse buttons are clicked. If keyboard control sequences are more to the player's liking, there are logical mnemonic sequences that will trigger the desired result.

Mission start and time features are also flexible in *Shuttle*. Any mission can be started from VAB roll-out, launch pad, in orbit, or landing. This will allow a player to skip to the desired phase of a mission without drudging through familiar territory. Two other tools are provided to give the player greater control over the simulation environment: time skip and time advance. Time skip will allow the player to go directly to a T+ or T- time index. Time

advance will allow the player to set a time to advance to at the press of a key. Fortunately, the simulation stops when player input is needed during the time advance. All required functions are automatically performed for the player in a time skip sequence.



There are some aspects of the game interface, however, that are downright annoying. For instance, on different machines, the amount of time one needs to press a key may vary greatly for it to register with the program. On this reviewer's fast 33MHz '386, a keypress of a second or more was often required in order to switch views. Another poorly executed interface element is the attempt at being *Windows*-like, but not quite. When changing the save log name, a dialog box is displayed. Clicking on the text input box for file name will *not* highlight the existing name and erase it if the player starts typing. If the player wishes to type a new name, he will have to manually erase the existing one completely with long keypresses.

Shuttle Bug ("Work Arounds")

There are twelve historical missions provided in the current release of *Shuttle*. Naturally, the game was designed to be played sequentially, with the player starting with the first test flight and moving forward in complexity. The player cannot progress to the next mission until the prior mission is successfully completed. However, due to some bugs at the time of this review (detailed later), **Virgin** has included a command line switch to give instant access to all missions. When starting *Shuttle*, adding /ALL will activate this feature. Those who have other problems can access **Virgin**'s BBS for bug fixes and lively dialog concerning *Shuttle* at (714) 562-5030.

The most important bug is with the Ku-band antenna deployment and storage. At any time before T+53 the player should time skip to T+54 to have the computer deploy the Ku-band antenna. The same is true after closing the bay doors in preparation for landing: time skip ahead by one minute after declaring landing comms in order to have the computer stow the Ku-band antenna properly.

Manual Control (Documentation)

If there is any one thing that stands out in this simulation as lacking, it is the manual. The manual seems to have no logical flow or order to it. Some aspects of the game that clearly need detailed information are either sparse or non-existent, while other systems and procedures that are not utilized in the simulation have paragraphs devoted to them. This is equally true for instrumentation and controls in the cockpit. While it is true that all buttons and gauges are present in the simulation, in some cases they may be redundant systems (with only one primary system functional) or have no function at all. This will prove confusing for most green pilots of the shuttle and can be very frustrating when flying in modes above FULL-ON AUTO. Also included in the box is a mission guide that gives sometimes-brief overviews of the 12 missions and a listing of keyboard commands.

The other item included in the box is a full-size poster of all the panels in the shuttle. While it may look impressive on the wall when friends come over, it is of little use while playing unless the player has a very large desk or extremely good eyes to view it from a distance if hanging on a wall. This reviewer would have much preferred a small book with the separate panels illustrated in a usable size and format. *[Ed: In the CGW offices, we spread the poster out on the floor while "flying" the shuttle.]*

Pilot Program (Game Play)

One of the first skills a new pilot will need to acquire is the capacity for maneuvering the shuttle and manned maneuvering unit in three dimensions. By disabling the digital auto-pilot, the player can control the roll, pitch, yaw and transitional movement of the vehicle. When starting in orbit, the shuttle is always rotating on at least one axis. Manual maneuvering is required on orbital re-entry. It can become quite difficult to get an object under control when it is rotating on several axes. This will be especially helpful when trying to get the MMU back into the shuttle payload bay or maneuvering the shuttle away from the Hubble telescope.

While in orbit, the player is sometimes told to "enjoy the view." However, views from orbit and surface detail are lacking in this simulation. This reviewer could live with no noticeable scenery on final approach for a landing, but the views of the earth from space are unimpressive. A random green patch on a sea of blue does not make for a breathtaking view. A little more detail in the form of storm systems, continental outlines, areas of ice, and other landmarks viewable from orbit would have provided much more enjoyment and have, as a result, kept this reviewer's finger off the time advance key.

Space Taste (Conclusion)

The debate between realism and gameplay rages on in almost every corner of the gaming industry. It is a lively topic often discussed on most of the major on-line services. In most cases, realism is sacrificed in the name of gameplay. With *Shuttle*, both sides win. With the range of options available to the player, *Shuttle* can be as easy or complex as the player wishes to make it. Players with an interest in space and hard-core simulation fans alike will blast off into orbit with this new simulation from **Virgin**. *Shuttle* has launched a new space race in the simulation game derby and is sure to be emulated in future simulation releases. **CGW**

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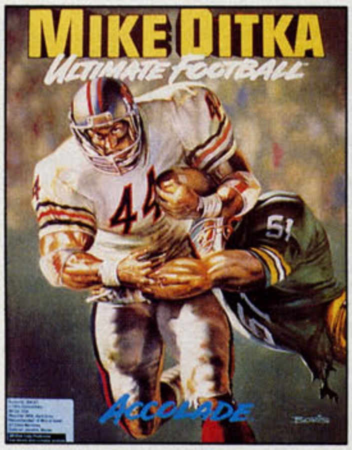
Accolade's Mike Ditka Ultimate Football

by Wallace Poulter

One minute and thirty-four seconds to go in this championship game. Detroit trails New York 35-30. The ball is on New York's eight-yard line. Second and seven; Detroit is in shotgun formation. The snap is back to quarterback Todd Drew. New York has a corner blitz called. Drew, in desperation, dumps the ball into the right flat to running back Bill Strange. There's no one near him — touchdown Detroit!

Opening Kickoff

Mike Ditka Ultimate Football (*Ditka*) from **Accolade** is the latest entry in the crowded field of graphic football games. According to producer Sam Nelson, "*Mike Ditka Ultimate Football* is targeted to people who love football and want an action-packed game rich in realism, playability, graphics, options and statistics — in that order." The championship caliber of *Ditka* is testament to the designer's specific goals and the skill with which these were implemented.



First and Ten

Ditka gives the player a number of options. These include single game, full season and playoff only. All 28 professional teams are available to the player. However, since neither the NFL nor the Players' Association has been licensed for the product, only city names and fictitious player names are used. In a stat-based game, of course, this would be a decisive drawback. Since this game's primary focus is on playability, however, this causes no problems.

The single-game option allows one to practice plays and strategies before taking on a full season or playoff schedule. Keyboard, joystick and mouse are supported. This reviewer found the joystick the easiest option, even with the button instructions reversed on the instruction card. Options include playing or coaching, fatigue, injuries, penalties, fumbles and one of four passing levels.

A seventeen-week schedule is available under the season option. User ease is provided with the automatic play ability.

Second and Seven

The interface is very smooth and intuitive. It allows players to choose from the various offensive schemes available (run and shoot, shotgun, pro set, single wing and others). Also, the four different levels of passing provide almost four different games. The easiest level, Beginner, allows even the most reluctant joystick jockey to be successful. This is because it stops the action whenever the passing mode is initiated and allows the user to cycle through the available receivers. Once the pass is thrown, all activity resumes and a yellow reception circle indicates where the pass will land. The receiver will move to this circle automatically. In the Intermediate mode, the action is also frozen, but the gamer is forced to control the receivers once the pass has been thrown.

TITLE:	Mike Ditka Ultimate Football
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$54.95 (IBM),
PROTECTION:	Code-Wheel Look-Up
DESIGNER:	Gene Smith
PUBLISHER:	Accolade San Jose, CA



The Advanced mode is, in this reviewer's opinion, the most enjoyable of the four modes. Quarterback decisions have to be made in real time, while the receivers act as they do in the Beginner mode. Now, the ability of a quarterback to look at more than one receiver is fully understood. Facing a corner or safety blitz, the gamer simply will not have sufficient time to look at multiple receivers. So passing to the first open receiver is an absolute must.

The Pro mode gives the real-time action of the Advanced difficulty level with the type of receiver control found in the Intermediate level. This mode is strictly for serious joystick jocks.

Interestingly enough, unlike most football games, in which running is infinitely easier than passing, this reviewer found the opposite true in *Ditka*. While it is possible to operate a run-oriented offense, the run-and-shoot offense of Detroit, Houston, Atlanta and Buffalo affords more excitement and opportunity to move the ball. The TE post option from the run-and-shoot with a dump into the flat is particularly difficult to defend against.

Great Hit

Defense plays an important role in football and the defense in *Ditka* is no exception. Six basic defenses, 3-4, 4-3, nickel, etc., are provided. Within these are four variations: blitz, medium pass defense, long pass defense and man-to-man coverage. After much experimentation, this reviewer recommends a basic 6-2-3 defense with medium coverage as the best combination. This allows gamers to take control of the strong safety and either clog up the middle in anticipation of the run or double-team a wide receiver. The computer opponent has an occasional fondness for the reverse. A 6-2-3 will normally stop this tactic cold. A bootleg, however, is a completely different matter.

Defense takes a while to learn. This is one of the more realistic aspects of the product. If one plays behind the receiver, one will give up far too many completions. However, an aggressive

defense that fronts the receiver will guarantee plenty of opportunities to break up passes. Getting the defender within the yellow reception circle offers the possibility of an interception. Of course there is a disadvantage. Gamers who are *too* aggressive may find that the occasional completion that takes place over the defending back's head can open up considerable real estate (and plenty of touchdowns) for the offense.

Third and Two

The Construction Set allows a complete fantasy league to be set up. Anything from a serious league to a very silly league can be formed. There's something appealing about a blitzing linebacker called Scrooge. Player attributes and team colors can also be modified. This reviewer has noted a number of team files that have already begun appearing on **GEnie** and other on-line services.

Within the Construction Set, the Playbook continues the **Accolade** tradition of allowing an expansion of the basic product. Many an armchair quarterback has expressed the confident belief that he could design a winning offense. *Ditka* provides this opportunity. Either an existing play can be modified or a play can be designed from scratch. This reviewer found success with such diverse plays as a "radical" student body right, and the "mega" Hail Mary.

Fummmmmbbbbbble

Interestingly enough, it is *Ditka*'s biggest strength that also shows its weakness. Offense puts fans in the seats, but defense wins championships. After this reviewer had a very enjoyable time crafting offensive plays using the Playbook, it was the lack of a *Defensive Playbook* which was most striking.

Fourth and Goal

Playoff mode allows a team to forgo the 17-game season and begin play at the start of the league playoffs. This style of play is particularly useful for those, like this reviewer, who want the immediate challenge of winning it all. The reward for winning the championship is, as one would expect, a nicely portrayed trophy enhancing the screen.

Trick Play (To Cheat or Not To Cheat)

All great game plans need gadget plays. Football lore is filled with the "Statue of Liberty" and others. Not to be outdone, *Ditka* includes a trick punt play. Once a player receives a punt from the opposition, it is actually possible to activate the passing mode and heave the ball back up the field (forward lateral?). Strangely enough, the computer will award the receiving team with a first-and-ten at the kicking team's original line of scrimmage! It is amusing and very useful for those who are willing to go to any lengths to win.

Touchdown

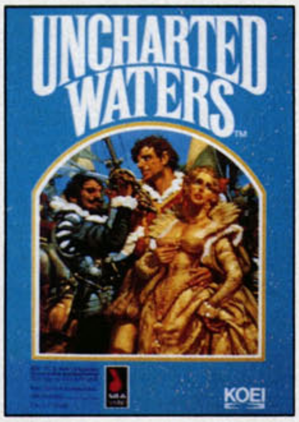
Mike Ditka Ultimate Football is a "Smash Mouth" entrant into the field. Its blend of quality graphics, playability and fun combines to form a superior product. Ultimately (pun intended), like all quality products, it leaves this reviewer wanting more. **CGW**

I Must Go Down to the Sea, Again

TITLE:	Uncharted Waters
SYSTEM:	IBM, Macintosh, Amiga
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
PUBLISHER:	Koei Corporation Burlingame, CA

Koei's Uncharted Waters

by Dave Arneson



Although the title of this article may be anachronistic, it effectively communicates that near-universal lure of the sea to men of vision, adventure and romance prior to the age of aviation. The sea was the passage to exotic lands, strange sights and fabulous riches. It is no wonder that so many grand tales begin with a young boy stowing away at sea. In **Koei**'s *Uncharted Waters*, the Japanese publisher of strategy games attempts to resurrect that era of romance and adventure.

As a game of seafaring adventure, the game begins fairly well. The sailing mechanics are intriguing with variations for an individual ship's rigging, wind, current, etc. So, it is realistic enough to allow player captains to go out and find the great trade wind "highways" and major currents. This is excellent, but there is a problem in that there are no annual or global weather patterns. Thus, a significant amount of historical and realistic challenge is missing. There is no hurricane season in the Caribbean and it is a simple matter to sail through the Northeast Passage in the dead of winter.

Uncharted History: What Year Is It?

The game's documentation says it starts in 1500 and goes to 1520. Nevertheless, the colonies and ports that one finds do not correspond with this. Indeed, the layout matches no particular time in history, with the possible exception of a generic date in the mid-1500s. Yet, even that is pretty loose. One wonders, for example, why Oslo is a major European port, while Stockholm isn't? Why are there huge islands in the oceans that match no known ones? (Although one of the islands *did* have a treasure buried on it, most of them had nothing of value but water.)

The geography of the game is even worse. Majorica can be found on the east coast of Sicily where, in reality, Syracuse should be found (instead of just off the southeast coast of Spain). This would be very understandable if the Ports moved randomly from game to game, but they do not. It simply reflects geography bad enough to be presented by Leonard Pinth Garnell on the old Saturday Night Live sketch.

Captain's Log (Any Port of Call)

Perhaps the greatest failing of *Uncharted Waters* is its repetitive nature. One quickly establishes a pattern upon entering any port that will hardly ever need to be varied: 1. Enter Port; 2. Restock Supplies; 3. Check Market and Sell Goods (*if* the prices are right); 4. Check Guild and Sell or Buy Artifacts (as needed); 5. Check Inn (See how much is needed to buy up the place!); 6. Check Pub (Find New Mates, Buy Drinks, Gossip, Buy More Drinks, Gossip Some More, Recruit Men [if needed]); 7. Buy Goods (if the prices are right) and 8. Save Game and Sail. Those who are looking for variety and surprises should weigh anchor and sail for a different game.

Trade Winds

Fortunately, *Uncharted Waters* executes the trading mechanism quite well. A good initial voyage for player captains to chart is to take a cargo of sugar and assorted goods to Oslo. It is a good run that allows one to stop at London to get wool and Antwerp to get porcelain. Then one sails back to Lisbon and proceeds to repeat the trip as needed. Another good trade windfall is the Majorica (buy grain, sell wool), Pisa (sell grain, buy artwork), Naples (sell artwork, buy wool) run. A variation of the latter is to buy porcelain in Venice to sell in Majorica or buy artwork in Istanbul to sell in Naples. There is also a minor market in Trezibolini (east side of the Black Sea) and Alexandria (due south of Istanbul).

The bonanzas of trade are either the coral from Santo Domingo or the gold of Panama. One cannot get into and out of Panama successfully, however, until reaching high level with lucky dragon figureheads on all of one's ships. Without these figureheads, one's merchant flotillas will be caught in the Sargasso Sea upon every attempted egress from Panama. With the figureheads, the Sargasso Sea will never cause a problem.

For those who have reached this lofty level of merchantdom, the best trade goods to take to the New World are weapons. The weapons/coral trade is very lucrative and should allow player merchants to refit their ships with lucky figureheads after a single voyage.

The only thing better is when the player is tapped for a mission from the King of Portugal with coral as the goal. Then it is advisable to sail in galleons and carracks, because one will want to haul *plenty* back! Sharp player merchants will buy used ships for the first trips and not worry about commanding those big crews quite yet!

Once a player has returned to the Old World with plenty of gold, his/her finances will be assured. Then it is possible to return to Europe and buy cities. Investing 120,000 gold in each port (60,000 in the market and 60,000 in the shipyards) should enable one to own majority interest in these port cities. So, after each gold run, it should be feasible to buy at least three ports. The King will be at his most approbative with regard to the player upon such purchases.

Plying One's Trade

As in any free-market system, selling more of the same goods into a market reduces its value. Conversely, purchasing a significant amount of the same item causes the price to rise. Oddly enough, however, *all* prices go up some, no matter what item is being purchased. Also, trade varies in a given port with its value based on foreign investment, so there are external factors to the market, as well as internal ones. Frankly, the trading mechanics almost could have been a great game in themselves. Instead, this portion of the game serves as only a nice complement to a game which needs more action and atmosphere.

Ugh, Captain, My Captain

One major detraction from the game's playability is the fact that the non-player characters are very much one-dimensional. There seems to be no need for more than five captains since

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none of them will ever die. As long as the player makes sure that their loyalty has been purchased during the "distribute" phase, one will never have to pay any attention to them. One does have to make sure that the captains have good sailing skills, but this happens virtually automatically, since one is constantly sailing all over Europe in order to sell and trade one's goods. Compared to other **Koei** games, in which the non-player characters were running around creating all sorts of mischief, the *Uncharted Waters* NPCs are a poor imitation.



Mission in Portugal

One important NPC that bright player captains will *not* ignore is the King of Portugal. To gain new titles from the King of Portugal, one must willingly undertake missions and complete them. Expeditious completion of the missions offers additional profits and one can even reach the point from which it is possible to court the Princess. So, how does one find out about these missions? Remember the section about the "Captain's Log?" One has to visit the local pubs. There, the player will have to buy drinks and gossip. (Oh, game, where is thy sting?) One should try both options at least twice if sufficient gold is available. Many times, there will be no mission, but some valuable information about markets will be gained. The market information is generally accurate, but it may not be useful. After all, if one is in Majorica, one already knows that grain is a good deal there.

Nevertheless, when someone wants to talk with the player captain, it is advisable to talk right then! One should not "pass go" or make more than one stop en route. If one does not drop everything and check matters out immediately, it is all too likely that one will end up sailing to distant ports only to discover that someone located in a port from which the player has just sailed wants to talk with him/her!

Another problem with the mission is that the man who wants one to undertake said quest is often the trader at the market square. He tends to offer one the mission *before* one has a chance to unload one's cargo. Then it is not possible to return there and sell goods until *after* the mission is completed. Otherwise, the player loses the mission!

Some missions can be awkward as well, such as when the King of Portugal asks one to deliver messages to the King of Spain or the Sultan. If one has been going after their ships, they are likely to make one wait an extraordinarily long time before it is possible to deliver that note. To avoid this potential problem, one should not attack the ships of either country (unless they attack first) until *after* the notes have been handed over.

The final sequence of missions are the ones in which the King of Portugal is seeking treasures. Once the King explains what he wants, a wise player will go to the pub. There, the player merchant must question and drink until getting a hint as to who one needs to see and where he is located. The person is always *far* away! An unfortunate aspect of this sequence is that it is impossible to complete missions before one hears about them. This is especially frustrating with the treasures. Even if one happens to search the beach in the right place, one will not find the treasure until going through the drink-and-gossip routine and finding the person with the map. It just seems like the game should give a person a *chance* to find the treasure *before* finding the map.

Once the player garners the goodies, it is wise to return to Lisbon immediately and give the treasure to the King. At that point, it is possible to court the Princess' favor and set sail on a short trading voyage or two. The reason for the voyages is that one will not (usually) get another mission right away. One or two stops later, one can expect to be summoned again. At that point, one should drop everything and return to the King. The player will find that pirates, and others, are taking quite an interest in his/her activities. So, expect attacks from that point on. Players will find themselves on military missions rather than trading voyages, so it will be advisable to bring gold and men rather than sugar!

Oddities

For some strange reason, buying Genoa will gain the player great animosity from both Spain and Turkey. This seems very odd, since buying Valencia does not upset the Spanish, nor are the Turks upset if one purchases any of their ports. One would think, at least, that Mecca might open one's fleet up to Turkish attack! Yet only Genoa upsets them. So, since there are plenty of other ports, why tick them off?

One is also forced into a lot of unnecessary gymnastics in order to handle one's wealth. This is because one can never have more than 60,000 in gold in one's possession at one time. Even when one is selling a cargo, the game will not allow the player to sell more than 60K of merchandise at a time. This is especially awkward with gold going for up to 1K a unit and ships carrying 200-300 such units each. The best way to carry more gold is to buy a good number of artifacts (limit: one of each type in possession at one time) and then sell them (unfortunately, at *half* what was paid for them) when cash is needed *and* there happens to be a Guild present (Guilds are not all that common).

So one must either buy and sell in small quantities or invest the money in 60K bunches into a port's market or shipbuilding industry. This is bad news because, after the first couple of years, one literally has too much money. Investing is the only way to get rid of it once that brand new fleet has been purchased. Why this limit applies, this reviewer cannot begin to guess.

Another arbitrary limit may be found when one is recruiting sailors. One is only permitted to spend 1K per recruiting session, but can have an unlimited number of such sessions at the pub during one day. When one needs 300 men and can only recruit them 30-50 at a time, it gets unnecessarily tedious.

Don't Know Much About History

Uncharted Waters simply could have been so much more than that. Just using some of the old NPC tricks from **Koei**'s other games would have meant an occasional and entertaining double-cross. As it is, one's captains are disgustingly loyal and faithful once they have been bought off. Trade is interesting in the early stages, but once one becomes rich and has bought the minimum number of ports, what more is there to do? There is none of the excitement of watching a market crash or hearing of some new exotic item on which one could conceivably corner the market. What of exploration? Well, since the world never changes, the excitement of discovery is only available for a little while. Why didn't **Koei** emulate the "New World" standard of Dan Bunten's *Seven Cities of Gold* where a rich, varied world was newly minted for every new game session? So, in the final analysis, *Uncharted Waters* is mildly interesting as it stands. When compared to what it *could* have been, it is more than mildly disappointing. Someone may yet design the "ultimate" game of 16th century exploration, but it isn't here yet. **CGW**



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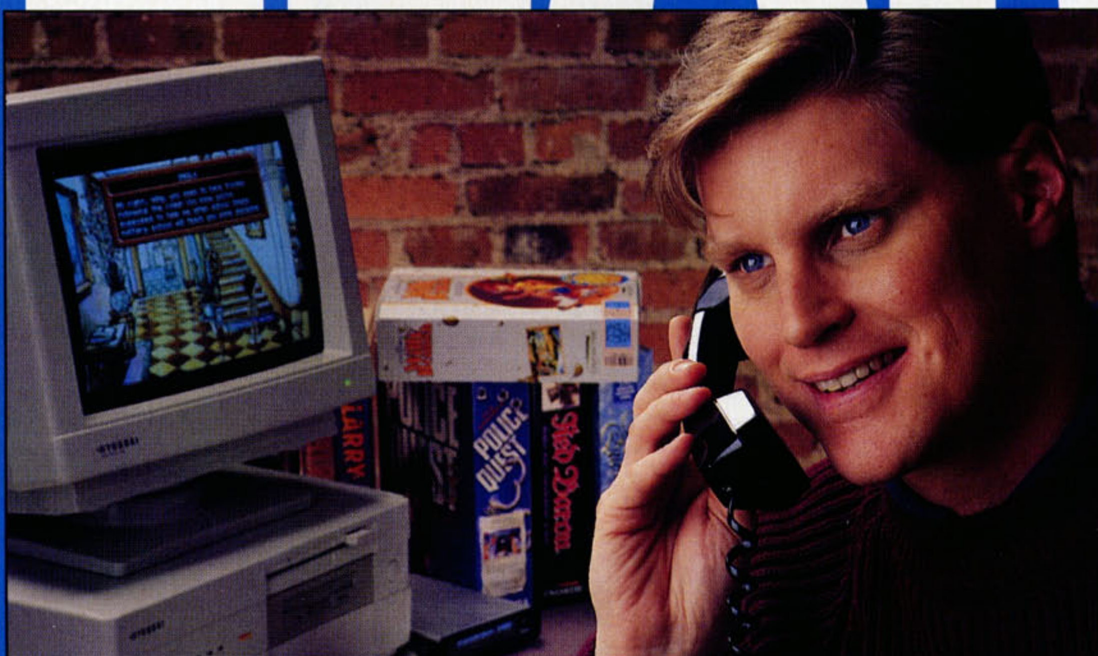
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Interplay's Star Trek:

by Allen

TITLE:	Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
SYSTEMS:	IBM
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	Document Look-up
PUBLISHER:	Interplay Santa Ana, CA



James Doohan (Montgomery Scott) has remarked that he and DeForest Kelly (Leonard McCoy) agreed to trade lines during the filming of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. As Spock lay dying, it was originally Scotty who was to have warned James Kirk not to open the protective engineering doors. It would then have fallen to Dr. McCoy to utter his trademark show-stopper "He's dead... [Jim]." Rather than risk shattering the drama of the moment with that familiar and often-lampooned expression, each officer was simply made to give advice which reflected the other's area of expertise.

During its original run on network television, 1966 to 1969, *Star Trek* established many such cliches and plot devices which punctuated and often characterized its 79 episodes. In the decade which followed, these cliches became so popular and so instantly recognizable that one can easily forgive the producers of six major *Star Trek* films, and five seasons of an amazingly successful new *Star Trek* series, for being cautious when they have referred their audience back to events that took place in the original series.

Interplay, however, has boldly chosen to return where no man had previously gone before for *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary* (*ST: 25A*). This eagerly-awaited program embraces the original series with all its characteristics in a way which attempts to endear it to those who have loved the show for 25 years.

The question raised in *Computer Gaming World*'s preview of *ST: 25A* concerned the series' followers, many of whom have expressed outrage at the way various authors, artists and filmmakers have depicted the further voyages of their favorite starship. The answer to exactly how the purists are going to react to this product will depend on which part of the game is being played, as well as the individual purist involved and how open-minded he or she is willing to be. There should be no question, however, that this is the most outstanding *Star Trek* yet produced for the computer, as well as a good, solid piece of entertainment from **Interplay**.

ST: 25A is a combination adventure game and space combat simulation, in which the player controls the actions of Captain James T. Kirk during the original five-year outing. The program is divided into seven missions, an arrangement intended to evoke the episodic format of the television show. (One of these is presented in two parts, so that one might argue there are actually eight missions.) Each episode opens on the classic *Enterprise* bridge. At the expected point, Kirk receives a communication from Starfleet that contains his orders. In most cases, the starship will arrive at its destination to find one or more enemies with an attitude problem. A space battle generally follows, though it is possible for Kirk to avoid hostilities through diplomacy in at least one location.

BattleTrek

The space battles are a challenging arcade exercise, but represent that part of the program which is least faithful to *Star Trek* drama. After raising shields and arming weapons, the player uses phasers and photon torpedoes in what amounts to a dogfight in zero gravity. By using a set of cross-hairs(!) and carefully leading the target, Kirk needs to score a dozen or more solid hits on the enemy ship. Torpedoes cause more damage than phasers, but are more difficult to aim and require more time to reset after firing. With further infidelity to the starship concept, neither the *Enterprise* nor its enemies are equipped with aft or lateral weaponry and the player is unable to view the action from any point of view other than directly forward. Only a "ship position monitor" — a radar screen in front of the captain's chair gives the player any idea what is happening in areas not displayed by the main view screen. The player has the option of expanding that view screen to the full size of the computer monitor. This makes targeting the enemy much easier, but does not allow the player any greater range of vision nor provide access to the radar screen.

Also on the bridge are top and side views of the Enterprise's exterior, which change color according to which system or section of the ship has taken damage. The player may briefly interrupt a battle long enough to instruct Mr. Scott to concentrate his repairs on a particular system which has been damaged. Normally, Scotty gives shields the highest priority. The player may also switch the display to monitor damage taken by the enemy vessel instead. Enemies include another Federation starship during some mock combat maneuvers, a slippery group of pirates called the Elasi, the familiar Klingon battle cruiser and a Romulan Bird of Prey complete with cloaking device. The Romulan allows ample time after it decloaks before it fires, but some alien-eyed players also claim to have seen that ship even with its cloak in place. Players may wish to consult with the Enterprise's science officer during the battle, who always has something to say, although not necessarily of value.

Possibly due to the budget restrictions of a weekly television show, battles on *Star Trek* have always been pictured mainly as tactical affairs in which the ship's computers were able to lock on their specified targets before firing. For the *Constitution*-class *Enterprise* to suddenly become as maneuverable as one of the small fighters in *Wing Commander* seems extremely unnatural and will likely arch more than a few pseudo-Vulcan eyebrows. On the other hand, the battles are well-designed and very much a satisfying challenge. The three-dimensional view of the enemy ships as they pass the *Enterprise* at different angles is particularly impressive.

The *Enterprise* must survive its battle with the enemy in order for Kirk to continue his mission. The final condition of the enemy ship apparently does not affect the mission which follows, nor does it alter the rating which the player receives at its completion.

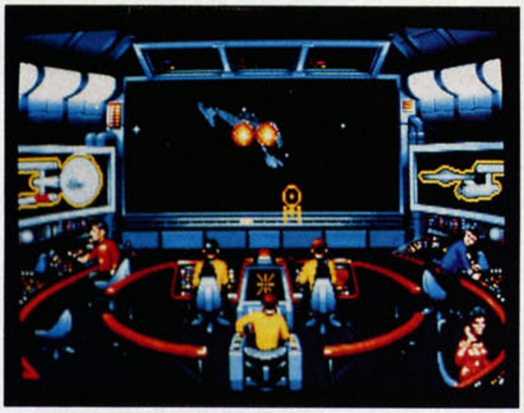
That's *Harry* Mudd to You (Plot)

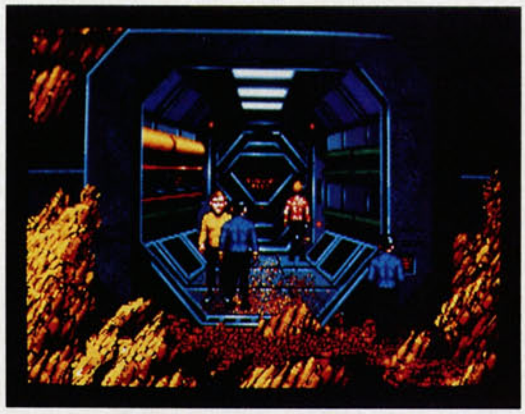
Following the message from Starfleet, Kirk may access the *Enterprise*'s computer to seek further information about his mission. Joined by Spock, McCoy and a red-shirted security officer, Kirk beams to another ship, space station or alien planet. Once

and Prosper

25th Anniversary

Greenberg





there, the game becomes more of a standard graphic adventure. By manipulating objects, exploring alien devices and interviewing other characters, the player must find the source of various problems and, in the tradition of *Star Trek*, put things to right.

"Demonworld" requires Kirk to stalk some nightmares while "Hijacked Tug" is a hostage rescue mission. "Love's Labor Jeopardized" is an attempt to control a plague aboard a space station and "Another Fine Mess" features the return of Harry Mudd. "The Feathered Serpent" is a two-part episode in which the crew confronts another alien-turned-deity, this one in Klingon space. In "That Old Devil Moon," the group must find and disarm yet one more doomsday device. Much has been said about the security officers ("red shirts," "cannon fodder," "sacrificial lambs") who, in the series, trotted happily to their doom. Once one of them dies in *ST: 25A*, the player may be sure that something has gone wrong. The game does not quite take the "crew that's expendable" approach used by the television series.

In addition to help from the security officer, Kirk may also call on Spock or McCoy. Spock, logically, is at his best when a computer needs attention. McCoy, of course, is a doctor... "I'm just a *doctor*, damn it!" However, all three will give advice when Kirk consults them. Often, this leads to some non-interactive conversation between the senior officers that includes some of the entertaining banter which was a favorite part of the television show. Unfortunately, the remainder of the *Enterprise* crew has even less to do in *ST: 25A* than their flesh-and-blood counterparts had on television.

The puzzles presented become more difficult as the game progresses and few of them are particularly easy. The stories themselves are also interesting and require the player to be familiar with the most commonly known *Trek* trivia. There are also several references to *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, including a guest appearance by Dr. Carol Marcus, behind whom looms an unfinished, early-model Genesis Device.

Once a mission is completed, the party returns to the *Enterprise* to receive a rating for their mission performance from Starfleet. The player would be well-advised to replay any mission for which he or she has not scored at least 90%, as this score will affect the crew's performance in upcoming space combat sequences. For the game's final battle, Kirk will need the most adept crew a high score can buy.

Captain to the Bridge (Interface Design)

The interface for these voyages of the starship *Enterprise* is, at times, confusing. For the most part, however, it works reasonably well. The player first selects an action such as "use," "look at" or "walk to," then moves the pointer to an object, location or person. Players should remember that they may use one object on another, even if both objects are in their inventory. There is very little typing required and Kirk's statements to other characters are selected from a menu. The mouse is most strongly recommended for this game, although players using either the mouse or joystick will still need to keep one hand on the keyboard during the space battles. Players may use only a keyboard throughout the game, but will put themselves at a disadvantage, particularly during the space battles, by doing so.

The sounds and graphics for *ST: 25A* are unforgettable. The caricatures of the bridge crew are instantly recognizable and constantly in motion. Kirk glances nervously around when not otherwise busy, while Spock calmly alternates his attention between his surroundings and his tricorder. The various locations are wonderfully imaginative and the *Enterprise* bridge is amazingly detailed and colorful. Only those tiny, important objects which are hidden on such complex screens will cause the player some frustration with the graphics, which support either VGA or EGA modes.

Players who lack a sound card will be missing out on an outstanding music score which features excerpts from the television show. The material is enjoyable to hear and its use is timed perfectly. Similarly, the sound effects aboard the *Enterprise* cannot but awaken feelings of nostalgia. The program supports most major sound cards.

ST: 25A's manual could have used more attention. Most experienced gamers will have little trouble making up for the lack of instructions; however, the subject matter of this program will probably attract many who have never before played an adventure game and it would be a loss if they were to walk away discouraged because of this problem. The manual also contains the game's only copy protection.

ST: 25A requires the use of a hard drive, on which it will require eight megabytes of space. A minimum of 10 MHz of speed is also required. Installation to the drive is a major procedure, the speed of which very much depends on the type of processor being used. Owners of 286 machines may have to wait as long as four hours for the process, while a fast 386 computer will take about 45 minutes. The real crime here is that the user must sit by the computer and switch disks throughout that period.

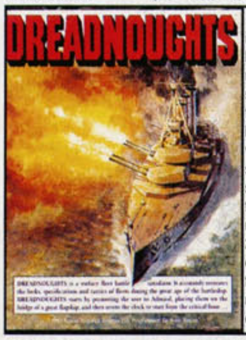
Star Fleet Evaluation

For this Trek-fanatic-turned-reviewer, *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary*'s major shortcoming is that it is over too soon. As of this writing, the game's developers have no plans for producing further episodes. However, that has yet to stop a *Star Trek* fan. Pencils out, everyone. It worked 23 years ago.... Save Star Trek — Write **Interplay**! **cgw**

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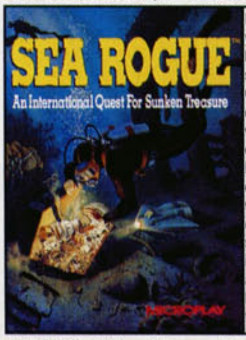
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In **'SEA ROGUE'** you'll search for history's greatest sunken treasures. Command a crew of five as an underwater archaeologist or a fortune hunter. By negotiating ocean currents, outwitting claim jumpers, hijackers, and surviving man-eating sharks you'll advance to wrecks like the Titanic or the Bismarck. **$39**

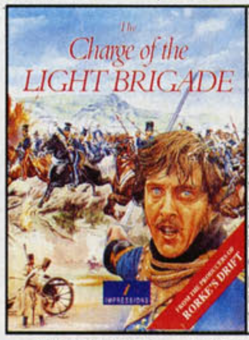
- Main Bttle Tank ME $36
- Malta Storm $36
- Man of War $36
- Mare Nostrum $26
- Marianas Turkey Shoot $28
- Midway $26
- Moscow Campaign $36
- North & South $27
- Northern Fleet $36
- Operation Overlord $36
- Pacific Storm Midway $36

IBM STRATEGY
- Are We There Yet? $17
- Ancient Art War $29
- Ancient Art War at Sea $29
- Ancient Art War in Sky $34
- Armada 2525 $32
- Balance of the Planet $19
- Bandit Kings of China $37
- Battle Isle $32
- Big Business $32
- Breach 2 Enhanced $19

IBM STRATEGY
- Breach 2 Scenario Disk $15
- Carrier Command $12
- Castles $36
- Castles Disk 1 $19
- Centurion $19
- Civilization $39
- Command HQ $19
- Conquered Kingdoms $36
- Covert Action $29
- Crisis in the Kremlin $37
- Designasaurus 2 $28
- Dino Wars $28
- DRAGON Force $31
- Dragon Lord $12
- Dune $29
- Empire $31
- Empire Deluxe $42
- Final Conflict $34
- FireTeam 2200 $29
- FireTeam Const Kit $25
- Fort Apache $34
- Full Metal Planet $31
- Genghis Khan $37
- Global Conquest $39
- Gold of the Americas $12
- Hidden Agenda $39
- Imperium $26
- Lemmings $32
- Lemmings Data Disk $19
- L'Empereur $37
- Liberty or Death $37
- Lost Admiral $34
- Lost Admiral Scenario $23
- Lost Admiral Enhanced $38
- Lost Patrol $12
- Medieval Lords $37
- Medieval Warriors $15
- Mega Lo Mania $31
- Merchant Colony $34
- Millenium $24
- Nobunaga 1 or 2 $37
- Nuclear War $12
- Objection $34
- Objection Enh $89
- Ogre $19
- Omega $30
- Operation Combat $34
- Overlord $29
- Pacific Theater of Oper $42
- Perfect General $34
- Perfect General Disk 2 $23
- Populous $12
- Populous Promise Land $14
- Populous 2 $38
- Power Monger $34
- PowerMonger WW1 $21
- Project Moonbase $24
- Project Space Station $15
- Railroad Empire $34
- Railroad Tycoon $34
- Rampart $27
- Reach for the Stars 3 $19
- Realms $29
- Renegade Legion Intrcpt $12
- Revolution 76 $29
- Rider of Rohan $31
- Romanc 3 Kngdm 1or2 $42
- Rules of Engagement $37
- Second Conflict $34
- Seven Cities of Gold $12
- Siege $38
- Sim Ant $37
- SimCity $29
- SimCity for Windows $37
- SimCity Graphic 1 or 2 $23
- SimCity Terrain Editor $15
- SimEarth $41
- Star Control $29
- Star Control 2 $37
- Starfleet 1 or 2 $38
- Stellar Crusade $12

IBM STRATEGY
- Strategic Forces $19
- Sword of Aragon $28
- Task Force 1942 $39
- Theatre of War $32
- Theatre Sets $21
- Traders $29
- Utopia $31
- Visions of Aftermath $12
- Warlords $29
- Worlds at War $29

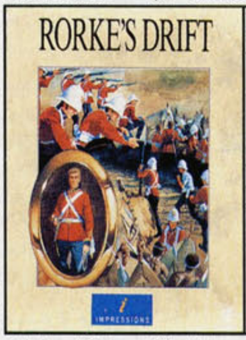
IBM ADVENTURE
- Lane Mastodon $12
- Laura Bow 2 $36
- Leather Goddesses 2 $42
- Leisure Suit Lrry 1 ega $16
- Leisure Suit Lrry 1 vga $34
- Leisure Suit Lrry 2, 3or5 $34
- Leisure Suit Lrry Bundle $39
- Light Quest $32
- Loom $19
- Lost in LA $37



'CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE' recreates the battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War. Defend using the smaller British, French, and Turkish Forces or play the attacking Russians. Features animated figures, individual or group commands, two player option and an improved mouse interface. **$34**

IBM ADVENTURE
- Advnts Willie Beamish $34
- All Dogs Go to Heaven $13
- Altered Destiny $34
- B.A.T. $19
- Black Cauldron $14
- Castle of Dr Brain $34
- Chmbr Sci Mutnt Prstss $25
- Code Name: Iceman $21
- Colonel Bequest $21
- Colonel Bequest 2 $34
- Conquests of Camelot $21
- Conquests of Longbow $34
- Conspiracy Deadlock $34
- Countdown $37
- Covert Action $29
- Crime Does Not Pay $34
- Crime Wave $37
- Cruise for a Corpse $34
- Dark Heart of Uukrul $34
- David Wolf:Scrt Agnt $15
- Deja Vu $12
- Deja Vu 2 Lost in LV $12
- Die Hard $28
- Don't Go Alone $12
- Duck Tales $15
- Earthrise $12
- East v West:Berlin '48 $ 9
- Eco Quest 1 $34
- Felony $12
- Free DC $34
- Future Wars $28
- Gamma Force $12
- Gateway $36
- Geisha $32
- Godfather $32
- Gold Rush $15
- Grail Quest $27
- Harley Davidson $12
- Heart of China $34
- Hostage $12
- Hound of Shadow $17

- Lost Treasures Infocom $42
- Magnetic Scrolls Bndl $34
- Manhunter NY $28
- Manhunter SF $15
- Maniac Mansion $18
- Martian Memorandum $37
- Mean Streets $37
- Mixed Up Mthr Goose $29
- Mixed Up Fairy Tales $32
- Murder by the Dozen $15
- Murder Club $28
- Murders in Space $12
- Neuromancer $15
- Oregon Trail $28
- Out of this World $36
- Plan 9 from Outer Space $31
- Police Quest 1 $28
- Police Quest 2 or 3 $34
- Prince of Persia $25
- Rise of the Dragon $34
- Robin Hood $34
- Rocketeer $32
- Search for the King $24
- Secrt Monky Islnd 1 $27
- Secrt Monky Islnd 2 $38
- Sex Olympics $24
- Sex Vixens from Space $12
- Sierra Adventure Bundle $39
- Shogun $12
- Sinbad $12
- Snoopy $ 9
- Space Quest 1 $34
- Space Quest 2 $28
- Space Quest 3 or 4 $34
- Space Quest Bundle $39
- Spellcasting 101 $19
- Spellcasting 201 $29
- Startrek 5 $12
- Startrek 25th Aniversry $36
- Time Quest $19
- Train $ 6
- Uninvited $12

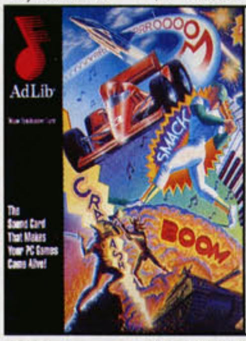


'RORKE'S DRIFT' is a simulation of the battle between 137 British soldiers & 4000 Zulu warriors on Jan 22 1879. You command the British in their attempt to hold out against the onslaught by controlling each man on a 3D map. Features animated combat & movement with mouse support & VGA. **$34**

- Indy Jones L Crsd ega $21
- Indy Jones L Crsd vga $27
- Indy Jones Fate Atlantis $38
- James Bond Stealth Aff $34
- King's Quest 1Enhncd $34
- King's Quest 2 or 3 $28
- King's Quest 4 $34
- King's Quest 5 ega $34
- King's Quest 5 vga $39
- Koshan Conspiracy $32
- Kristal $15

- Universe 1 -3 Ea $34
- War in Middle Earth $15
- Where Amrcas Pst CSD $37
- Where Europe CSD $30
- Where USA CSD $30
- Where World CSD $27
- Where World CSD Dlx $49
- Where Time CSD $30
- Wonderland $19
- Zak McKracken w/HB $18
- Zombie $12

IBM TRADITIONAL
- 3D Pool $12
- 3 in 1 Players Pack $37
- Amarillo Slim Poker $15
- Backgammon by George $12
- Battle Chess 1 $29
- Battle Chess 2 $31
- Battle Chess WIN $29
- Big Boggle $15
- Blackjack DOS/WIN $34
- Bridge 6.0 $28
- Casinos of the World $32
- Ceasar's Palace $15
- Centerfold Squares $21
- Check Mate DOS/WIN $36
- Chessmaster 3000 $32
- Chessmaster 3000 WIN $38
- Chess Net $34
- Clue Master Detective $15
- Cribbage King/Gin King $19
- Crossword Magic $32
- Dealers Choice Poker $34
- Dr Thorp's Blackjack $32
- Electric Jigsaw $15
- Faces: Tetris 3 $25
- Femmes Fatale $27
- Femme Fatale DD 1-3 $18
- Games People Play $27
- GO Master 5 Dlx $109
- GO Master 5 Dlx WIN $109
- GO Joseki Genius $39
- GO Junior $19
- GO Master $34
- GO Master 5 DOS/WIN $39
- GO Master 5 Toolkit $39
- GO Scribbler $34
- GO Tactical Wizard $39
- Grand Slam Bridge $22
- Home Casino Spectacular $15
- Hoyle's Games 1 or 2 $21
- Hoyle's Games 3 $29



The **'ADLIB'** music synthesizer card by **ADLIB INC** adds sound capability to hundreds of existing PC games. Using its 11 different FM synthesized voices, it can reproduce any sound. The standard audio jack allows you to plug in any pair of headphones, boombox, or bookshelf speaker. **$64**

- Ishido $34
- Jeopardy 1 or 2 $10
- Jigsaw Pinups $24
- Jones in the Fast Lane $24
- Living Jigsaws $ 9
- Lexicross $24
- Monopoly $24
- Omar Sharif on Bridge $37
- Penthouse Jigsaw $24
- Pinball WIN $29
- Pinball Construction $ 9
- Price is Right $15
- Prime Time Hits 1 or 2 $24
- Rack'em $12
- Risk $24
- Risk WIN $29
- Sargon 4 or 5 $34
- Scrabble $24
- Scrabble Deluxe $34
- Shanghai 2 $31
- Shogi Master $34
- Solitaire Royale $19
- Solitaires Journey $36
- Sorry $15
- Spot $15
- Stratego $31
- Strip Poker 3 $31
- Strip Poker Data 1-5 Ea $19
- Super Jeopardy $27
- Super Tetris $32
- Tetris $24
- Trivial Pursuit $26
- Trump Castle $25
- Trump Castle 2 $32
- Video Poker DOS/WIN $34
- Welltris $24
- Wheel of Fortune 1-3 Ea $10
- Wheel of Fortune Gold $15
- Wordtris $29
- Wrld Chmp Backgamn $24
- Wrld Chmp Cribbage $24

IBM SPORTS
- 4D Boxing $17
- 4th & Inches $12
- 1992 Winter Olympics $32
- ABC Boxing $32
- ABC Mon Night $34
- All American College Fb $36
- All Star Sports Pak $34
- APBA Baseball $28
- APBA Encyclopedia $34
- APBA General Manager $29

IBM SPORTS
- LH Full Count Baseball $30
- LH Hockey $30
- LH Pro Basketball $30
- LH Team Disks $15
- LH League Leaders $15
- LH Utility Disks $15
- Links Golf $37
- Links Golf WIN $39
- Links Course 1 -6 Ea $17
- Low Blow $12

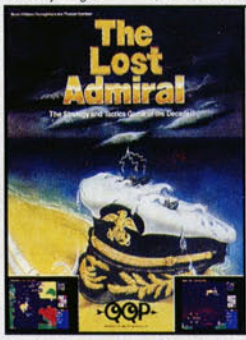


'ADLIB GOLD 1000' from **ADLIB INC** is a high quality **stereo** sound card. It complies with Multimedia PC sound adapter standards. Features: 16 bit stereo DAC providing 96db of dynamic range, programmable audio mixer, 20 stereo channels, MIDI input and output, sampling rates of up to 44.1 KHz, stereo input jack, and game port. **$179**

- APBA Micro Manager $32
- APBA Stat Master $29
- APBA Wizard $29
- APBA 1908 - 91 Ea $21
- APBA Basketball $28
- APBA Bowling $19
- APBA Football $49
- Basketball Challenge $28
- B ball Ch. 1987 - 88 Ea $13
- B ball Ch. 1989 - 90 Ea $17
- Bo Jackson Baseball $32
- Blades of Steel $26

- Madden Football $21
- Madden TD 89 & 90 $18
- Madden Football 2 $32
- Magic Johnson Fst Brk $ 6
- Magic Johnson MVP $15
- Mario Andretti Racing $17
- ML Basbll Mngr's Chllng $24
- ML World Series Disks $17
- ML TD 1982 - 1990 Ea $17
- ML All Stars $17
- ML Franchise Disks Ea $20
- ML Box Score Stats $20
- ML GM Disk 3 $25
- ML Roster Security $20
- ML Basketball $28
- ML Personal Pro Golf $28
- ML Football Deluxe $39
- ML Ftball Team Disks $17
- Michael Jordan Flt Sim $44
- Mike Ditka Football $34
- NASCAR Challenge $31
- NFL Challenge $60
- NFL 1984 - 1987 Ea $15
- NFL 1988 - 1991 Ea $22
- NFL Preseason Disk $22
- NFL All Star Teams $22
- NFL College Alumni $22
- NFL College Teams $19
- NFL Dream Teams $20
- NFL Greatest Teams $22
- NFL Roster Editor $20
- NFL Situation Editor $20
- NFL Football $31
- NFLP roleague Football $24
- Nicklaus Signature Edit $42
- Nicklaus SE Clip Art $24
- Nicklaus Greatest 18 $27
- Nicklaus Unlimited Golf $29
- NG Clip Art $17
- NG Course 2 $ 6
- NG Course 1 & 2 $19
- NG Course 3, 4, or 5 $15

- Cycles Grand Prix $28
- Daily Double Horse $19
- Days of Thunder $24
- Dirk's Baseball Encyclpd $19
- Fast Break $17
- Games Winter Chllng $34
- GFL Champ Football $ 9
- Grand Prix Circuit $17
- Greens $34
- Greg Norman Shark Att $25
- Gretsky Hockey 2 $34
- Gretsky League $26



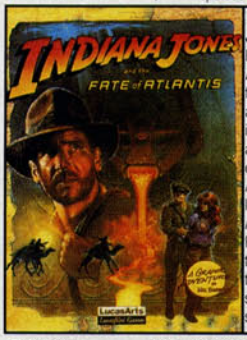
'LOST ADMIRAL' is a turn based naval strategy game. Features 9 scenarios, a random map scenario, 15 campaign games, flagships with special abilities, very strong artificial intelligence, in depth officers ranking system, a career history that accumulates as you play, and a 2 player option. **$34**

- Hardball 2 $28
- Hardball 3 $34
- Indianapolis 500 $17
- International Sports Ch $29
- Joe Montana Football $31
- John Elway's QB $ 6
- King's Beach Volleyball $15
- Lakers v Celtics $19
- LH 3 in 1 Football $30
- LH Boxing $30
- LH College Basketball $30

- Omni Play Basketball $34
- Over the Net Volleyball $24
- Pete Rose Baseball $ 9
- PGA Tour Golf $32
- PGA Tour Golf WIN $32
- PGA Tour Golf Disk 1 $17
- PGA Tour Golf Ltd Edt $45
- Playmaker Football $32
- Pro Football Analyst $34
- Pro Tennis Tour 2 $32
- Road to the Final Four $37

IBM AMIGA MACINTOSH GAMES AND HINT BOOKS FOR LESS

IBM SPORTS
- Reel Fish'n $12
- Serve & Volley $12
- Skate or Die $15
- Ski or Die $16
- Speedball 2 $25
- Sport of Kings $15
- Super Car Pack $37
- Team Suzuki $25
- Tennis Cup $32
- Tie Break Tennis $27



'INDIANA JONES: THE FATE OF ATLANTIS' is the fourth Indy Jones adventure. Again, it is Indy vs Nazis as he tries to uncover the secrets of Atlantis. Visit Iceland, Monte Carlo, Africa, & Crete. Features 200 locations, great animation, interactive sound, and mouse support. **$38**

- TKO Boxing $ 6
- Tom Landry Football $29
- Tony LaRussa Basebll $32
- T LaR Fantasy Managr $15
- T LaRussa Stadiums $15
- T LaR Teams1901-68 $15
- Weaver Baseball 1.5 $19
- Weaver Baseball 2.0 $32
- Weaver Commissioner $16
- Weaver 1988 - 1989 Ea $16
- Weaver Commisnr 2.0 $21
- Weaver 2.0 1990 Teams $16
- 1990 Stats/Mngr Profils $16
- Weaver 2.0 Comm Edt $56
- World Circuit $34
- World Class Soccer $28

HINT BOOKS
- Maniac Mansion $10
- Martian Dreams $13
- Matrix Cubed $10
- Might & Magic 1 or 2 $10
- Might & Magic 3 $16
- Planet's Edge $16
- Police Quest 1 - 3 Ea $10
- Pool of Darkness $12
- Pool of Radiance $10
- Populous 1&2 Officl Str $16
- Power Monger $10
- Power Mngr Strategy Bk $19
- Quest for Clues 2, 3or4 $21
- Quest for Glory 1-3 Ea $10
- Railroad Tycoon $10
- Rise of the Dragon $10
- Run 5 Issue 1 - 20 Ea $ 6
- Savage Empire $10
- Search for the King $10
- Secret Mnky Islnd 1or 2 $10
- Secret of Silver Blades $10
- Shadow Sorcerer $10
- 688 Attack Sub $10
- Advnturs Willy Beamish $10
- Altered Destiny $10
- Bard's Tale 1 - 3 Ea $10
- Buck Rogers 1 or 2 $10
- Castle of Dr Brain $10
- Champions of Krynn $10
- Civilization $16
- Code Name Iceman $10
- Colonel Bequest 1 or 2 $10
- Conquests of Camelot $10
- Conquests of Longbow $10
- Curse of Azure Bonds $10
- Death Knights of Krynn $10
- Dragons of Flame $10
- Dragon Wars $10
- Drakkhen $10
- Elvira 1 or 2 $10
- Eye of Beholder 1 $10
- Eye of Beholder 2 $10
- Fountain of Dreams $10
- Free DC $10
- Gateway Savage Frntr $10
- Hard Nova $10
- Harpoon Battlebook $19
- Heart of China $10
- Hero's Quest 1 - 3 Ea $10
- Immortal $10
- Indy Jones Lst Crsade $10
- Indy Jones Fate Atlantis $10
- King's Quest 1 - 5 Ea $10
- Leisr Suit Larry 1 - 5 Ea $10
- Loom $10
- Lord of the Rings 1 or 2 $10
- Magic Candle 1 or 2 $10
- Manhunter NY or SF $10



'MARTIAN MEMORANDUM' is an exhilarating, fast paced interactive mystery. You are Tex Murphy, a hard boiled gumshoe who faces murder, deception, and prophecy while searching for the martian memorandum. Features fully animated talking characters and on demand help. **$37**

- Simcity/Simearth $20
- Simearth $19
- Space Quest 1 - 4 Ea $10
- Starflight 1 or 2 $10
- Strategy Plus 3 -11 Ea $ 8
- Strategy Plus 12-18 $ 5
- Treasures Savage Frntr $10
- Tunnels & Trolls $10
- Ultima 4 - 7 Ea $10
- Wizardry 6 Cosmic Frg $12
- Wizardry 7 Crusade $12
- Yeager's Air Combat $19



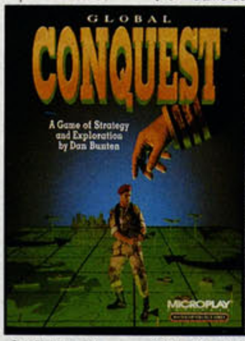
The 'THUNDER BOARD' is a sound board that is 100% compatible with Soundblaster and Adlib. It reproduces digitized sounds using an 8 bit DAC. Features include dynamic filtering, 11 Voice FM music synthesizer, sampling rate up to 22 KHz, microphone input, joystick port, and a 2 watt power amplifier. **$84**

IBM ROLE PLAYING
- 2400 AD $28
- Autoduel $26
- Bad Blood $31
- Bard's Tale 1 $15
- Bard's Tale 2 $19
- Bard's Tale 3 $31
- Bard's Tale Cnstrctn St $24
- Battletech 1 $12
- Battletech 2 $31
- Blade Warrior $12

IBM AD & D
- AD&D Bundle $38
- Champions of Krynn $20
- Curse of Azure Bonds $15
- Dark Queen of Krynn $32
- Death Knights of Krynn $20
- Dragon Strike $32
- Dragons of Flame $12
- Eye of the Beholder $32
- Eye of the Beholder 2 $38
- Gateway Savge Frontr $32
- Heroes of the Lance $12
- Pool of Darkness $38
- Pool of Radiance $15
- Secret of Silver Blades $15
- Shadow Sorcerer $32
- Treasurs Savage Frontr $32
- War of the Lance $ 9

IBM ROLE PLAYING
- Bloodwych $25
- Buck Rogers 1 $15
- Buck Rogers 2 $32
- Captain Blood $ 9
- Captive $30
- Celtic Legends $32
- Champions $37
- CHARACTR EDITORS $16
- Conan $29
- Corporation $29
- Cybergenic Ranger $32
- Cyber Space $29
- Darklands $39
- Drakkhen $37
- Dragon Wars $12
- Dusk of the Gods $38
- Earthling $32
- Elvira 1 Mistress Dark $34
- Elvira 2 Jaws Cerberus $42
- Escape from Hell $17
- Fire King $10
- Flames of Freedom $28
- Fountain of Dreams $15
- Hard Nova $17
- Hero's Quest 1 $21
- Hero's Quest 2 or 3 $34
- Hyperspeed $34
- Immortal $17
- Keys to Maramon $19
- King's Bounty $19
- Knights of Legend $30
- Legacy of the Necromncr $29
- Legend $31
- Light Speed $19
- Lord of the Rings 1 $34
- Lord of the Rings 2 $37
- Loremaster $39
- Lure of the Temptress $37
- Magic Candle 1 $15
- Magic Candle 2 $37
- Matrix Cubed $32
- Mechwarrior $34
- Megatraveller 1 $16
- Megatraveller 2 $19
- Megatraveller 3 $39
- Midwinter 1 $12
- Midwinter 2 $28
- Might & Magic 1 $12
- Might & Magic 2 $12
- Might & Magic 3 $37
- Might & Magic 4 $42
- Mines of Titan $12
- Mission Impossible $31
- Murder $29
- Paladin $21
- Paladin Scrolls Disk $16
- Pirates $ 9
- Planet's Edge $37
- Prophecy 1 $12
- Questron 2 $12
- Rings of Medusa $24
- Scavengers $34
- Sea Rogue $39

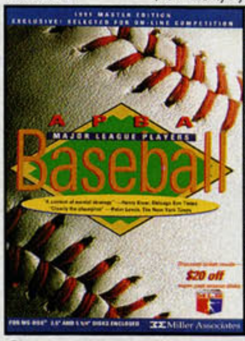
IBM ROLE PLAYING
- Sentinel Worlds $15
- Shadowgate $31
- Sleeping Gods Lie $29
- Sorcerian $34
- Space 1889 $16
- Space Inc $34
- Space Rogue $30
- Space Wrecked $31
- Spellbound $39
- Spirit of Excaliber $19



'GLOBAL CONQUEST' is the first strategy game that allows up to 4 players to compete while exploring a **random** world via modem, link, or LAN. You face up to four cutthroat computer adversaries, each with a distinct personality. Features 3 world view sizes and control of land, sea & air forces. **$39**

- Starflight 1 or 2 $19
- Sword of the Samurai $ 9
- Swrd Samrai & Pirates $16
- Tales Magic: Prophcy S $38
- Tangled Tales $21
- Terran Envoy $12
- Third Courier $ 9
- Times of Lore $28
- Tunnels & Trolls $12
- Twilight 2000 $34
- Ultima Martian Dreams $37
- Ultima Savage Empire $34
- Ultima Trilogy $35
- Ultima Trilogy 2 $45
- Ultima 1-6 Bundle CD $59
- Ultima 4 or 5 $35
- Ultima 6 False Prophet $39
- Ultima 7 Black Gate $45
- Ultima Stygian Abyss $48
- Uncharted Waters $42
- Vengeance of Excalibur $19
- Windwalker $28
- Wizardry Trilogy $32
- Wizardry 4 $19
- Wizardry 5 $32
- Wizardry 6 Cosmic Frg $37
- Wizardry 7 Crusaders $39

IBM ACTION /ARCADE
- Airborne Ranger $12
- Altered Beast $27
- Amazing Spiderman $12
- Arachnaphobia $28
- Armor Alley $27
- Artura $ 6
- Back to the Future 2 $15
- Back to the Future 3 $25
- Barbarian $ 9
- Bart Simpsn House Wrd $31
- Battle Master $37
- Battlestorm $32
- Bill & Ted's Excllnt Adv $19
- Blockbuster $ 9



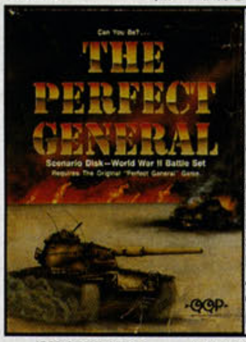
'APBA BASEBALL' includes all of the professional baseball features you might want. Start your own league, draft your own teams, or play with the actual rosters. Unlimited number of teams, adjustable difficulty level, more than 60 player ratings, and instant replay. Includes the newest season disk. **$28**

- Blockout $28
- Blood Money $28
- Brain Blaster $28
- Budokan $17
- Colorado $ 9
- Continuum $37
- Cool Croc Twins $24
- Crackdown $17
- Dark Century $27
- Day of the Viper $19
- D Generation $32

IBM HARDWARE
- Ad Lib Sound Card $64
- Ad Lib Gold 1000 $179
- Adlib Progrmrs Manual $27
- Adlib Surround Sound $64
- Adlib Telephone Module $64
- Ad Lib Visual Composr $75
- Ad Lib Speakers $15
- Flight Stick $43
- Flight Stick w Falcon $46
- Game Card 3 $39
- Champ Joystick $24
- Maxx Control Yoke $59
- Rudder Peddals $39
- Mouse 3 Button $29
- Sound Blaster $109
- Sound Blaster Pro $189
- Snd Blaster Speakers $15
- Snd Blaster Voice Edtr $54
- Sound Star Snd Board $14
- Thrustmaster Joystick $69
- Thrustmstr Pro Joystick $109
- Thrustmstr Weapn Cntrl $79
- Thunder Board SndBrd $84
- Thunder Board Spkrs $15
- Dig Dug $ 6
- Double Dragon 2 $15
- Dr Doom's Revenge $12

IBM ACTION /ARCADE
- Dragon's Lair 1 $24
- Dragon's Lair 2 $34
- Drgn's Lair Singe Cstl $34
- Finale $ 9
- Freakn Funky Fuzzballs $19
- Galaxian $ 6
- Gauntlet 1 or 2 $ 9
- Golden Axe $17
- Gold of the Aztecs $29
- Grave Yardage $12
- Gremlins 2 $ 9
- Guy Spy $29
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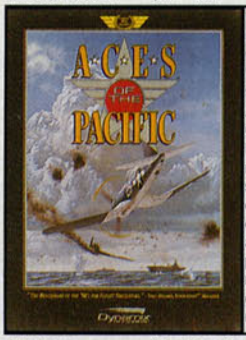
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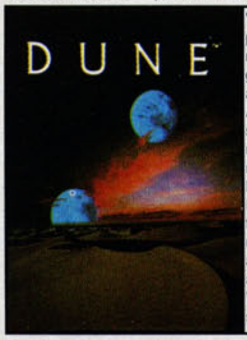
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Baseball by the Numbers

Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball Version 3.0

by Win Rogers

TITLE:	Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball Version 3.0
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1-2 plus league play
PRICE:	Game: $35.00; Roster disks: $20.00/season Disks and cards: $32.25/season
PROTECTION:	Hidden files on disk
PUBLISHER:	Strat-O-Matic Game Co. Glen Head, NY 11545 (516) 671-6566



Board games do not usually translate well to the computer. The more faithful the computer game is to its board-game roots, the less imaginative it is likely to be in taking advantage of the computer's capabilities. There are computer games today that do a much better job of creating the excitement received from playing *Risk* or *Monopoly* around the kitchen table than the computer adaptations of those games (which are probably in the clearance bin of the local software store).

Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball Version 3.0 is based on the world's most popular baseball board game, first released in 1961. The board game is a comprehensive simulation of the statistical probabilities underlying the game of baseball. It is less an imitation of real-life baseball than a paper-and-pencil precursor of today's computer baseball simulations. Each year the company releases a new set of player cards that translates the previous year's major league performances into tables to be read when three dice are thrown to determine the outcome of each batter-versus-pitcher confrontation. Over the years, subtleties have been added, so the more time players are willing to invest, the more precisely the game will reflect lefty-righty differentials, fielding and baserunning skills and even the effects of playing in different ballparks.

The company tabulates data from old box scores to prepare historic card sets and knows more about the performance of Pie Traynor against left-handed and right-handed pitchers in 1927 than anyone else — more than our grandfathers did.

All statistics-based computer baseball games owe a major debt to *Strat-O-Matic Baseball* and its chief rival *APBA*. Previously, the company was reluctant to take the natural step of adapting its board game to the computer. Part of the mystique of *Strat-O-Matic Baseball* has always been its difficulty. Running a "Strat" league requires several people to spend a lot of time playing games and keeping records. The company seems to have felt that the computer threatens the integrity of the board game by making things too easy. The first computer versions of *Strat-O-Matic*, dating from 1986 (Apple) and 1987 (IBM), used the computer strictly as a record-keeping tool. One still had to purchase the card sets and enter appropriate numbers into the computer.

Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball Version 3.0, new this year, is the first stand-alone computer version playable without the player cards. The manual waxes poetic about the player cards ("the heart and soul of the *Strat-O-Matic* baseball game") and claims that holding them in one's hand keeps one more engaged in the game than one is with other computer games, but they have finally given the computer full access to the results tables. It is equivalent to the day the data processing people finally threw away their beloved IBM punch cards.

This review is geared toward those unfamiliar with the board game or with earlier versions of the computer game. From here on *Strat-O-Matic* refers to the new version of the computer game. Most readers will simply want to know how well the new game plays as a baseball simulation.

The review copy came with player cards and disks for the 1991 and the 1927 seasons. It has an elaborate copy protection scheme that loads hidden files onto the hard disk that must be "recalled" (deinstalled) before the game can be moved to a different computer. The game can be played without a hard disk. It requires 640K of memory, and requires a CGA or EGA card if one wants to view the optional graphics. The company still sells its earlier computer version in Apple and Commodore formats. It plans to continue to issue player disks for those computers but *not* to upgrade the game for those machines. While the game has previously been available only through mail order, the company plans to start distribution through retail outlets.

Strat-O-Matic couldn't be more different from a glossy commercial product like *Bo Jackson Baseball*. Many will find the differences refreshing, others annoying. This is the rare computer game whose box does not have a false bottom to make the buyer think he is getting more product than he actually is. It has some audio and video "enhancements," but they are harmless and removable (see sidebar). They have apparently not spent any money on market research or graphic design for their packaging, but instead have put their money into the licensing fee to the Major League Players' Association for current player statistics. "User friendly" is not in *Strat-O-Matic*'s vocabulary. Their first loyalty is to their board game, and while they give numerous choices and options, they have not thought out the needs of a gamer with no knowledge of the board game.

The documentation is dense and wordy, contained in a lengthy manual and numerous separate sheets — charts, rosters, order forms, newsletters and so forth. It provides player cards not only for a basic 27-man roster for each team, but also for dozens of marginal players. This reviewer had hundreds of cards spread out over the living room floor before realizing that the cards had come with two sets of National League East teams and no American League West teams. Nowhere in the lengthy documentation is there a phone number for the **Strat-O-Matic** company; the number shown in the information box was obtained from Directory Assistance. The company staff was helpful and prompt in solving the problem and answering questions.

The game offers a bewildering range of configuration and rules options. The key decision, found on one of the setup menus, is whether to play "without cards," with "automatic dice" or

"manual dice." The choice reflects the degree to which one wants to depart from the original board game. Actually, all three modes can be played with or without cards, because the computer always has direct access to the player data. In "manual dice" mode, the player rolls real dice and enter the results into the computer, which then calculates the outcome. "Automatic dice" mode shows the roll of the dice on-screen. The "without cards" mode hides the result of the dice roll for a more transparent simulation of a baseball game. However, there are still screen messages that remind players of the workings of the charts and numbers behind the scenes.

The game is played on a no-nonsense screen with the players' names printed out where they would be on the field along with a shorthand indication of their fielding capabilities. The line score is at the top, and there is more information available about batter and pitcher across the top and in an information window. By toggling through various alternative charts that can be viewed in the information window, it is possible to obtain an exact readout of the possibilities for success of bunting, sacrificing and other strategic choices at any time in the game. The game ignores balls and strikes and operates in a one-pitch-per-batter mode *except* in special cases like stolen bases. One hits the return key, a symbol of the ball heads off in the appropriate direction and a window opens to announce the result of the play. Two players can each manage a team, or the computer can manage one or both teams. At any point the computer can take over and play the rest of the game or only as far as a specified inning.

Full results — a box score and play-by-play summary — are available whether the game is an exhibition or a league game. There is no need for eye-hand coordination and no time pressure. Even with a computer-managed team in the field the human player must hit the return key to start each play. The game encourages one to make the most of the strategic possibilities inherent in baseball. One can bring in a relief pitcher at any time without needing to warm him up in advance. Line-ups can be checked, fielders repositioned or substitutions made at any time.

Stolen bases are another good example of the cerebral atmosphere of "Strat." It is a two-step process. One rolls the dice (or has the computer do it) to find out how good a lead the runner got. Then, only if the runner got a good lead does one roll again to see if he made it.

There is also an awesome array of utilities for keeping records, managing rosters and replaying simulated seasons. A couple of examples must suffice to show the attention to detail evident in the game. Along with other statistics in a replayed season, the game keeps track of the relationship between the player's usage and his usage in the real season that is the basis for his records. A game player who wants an impeccably accurate recreation of the season will rest a player or remove him from the roster when he has appeared in as many games in the simulation as he did in real life. When the computer is replaying a season, the game can be directed to save box scores and play-by-play summaries for all games, no games or specific games in which certain key events take place (i.e. a no-hitter, shutout, player hitting for the cycle or more than a specified number of RBIs, etc.).

With all the attention to detail, there are still tasks that should have been assigned to the computer and were not. It is possible to use a designated hitter, but the computer manager is not able to choose a lineup if a designated hitter is used with a National League team or not used with an American League team. So it remains the gamer's task to choose the lineup manually. Also, interestingly enough, the company went to great effort to provide accurate player cards for 1927, but did not provide the season schedule, either on the disk or in hard copy. In addition, there is no utility for generating a season schedule automatically. To replay the 1927 season, assuming one could scare up a copy of the season schedule, a gamer would have to program it (or an approximation) into the computer series by series.

As an overall simulation of the game of baseball, *Strat-O-Matic* is outclassed by the competition. Other games may offer an arcade mode, animation and far better graphics, of course, but some even give *Strat-O-Matic Baseball* a good battle on the statistical side, its home turf. The original *Earl Weaver Baseball*, *Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball*, and *MicroLeague Baseball: The Manager's Challenge* offer somewhat comparable statistical models, reporting capabilities, computer managers and utilities for managing a league and replaying a season. The makers of *Strat-O-Matic Baseball* are too much in love with their original board game to build a product that competes with these more comprehensive programs. This product has unique value as a computer rendition of the classic board game that made these competing products possible. It *still* sets an awesome standard. None of the games mentioned above goes to the trouble of tabulating real lefty-righty breakdowns for all players in years before they were routinely collected and published. Any baseball enthusiast with a strong interest in statistics should take a look at this absorbing program, if only to understand other computer simulations better. In fact, those who have no interest in graphics and simply want a satisfying statistical simulation may find *Strat-O-Matic Computer Baseball* (Version 3.0) to be the *best* baseball program of all. **CGW**

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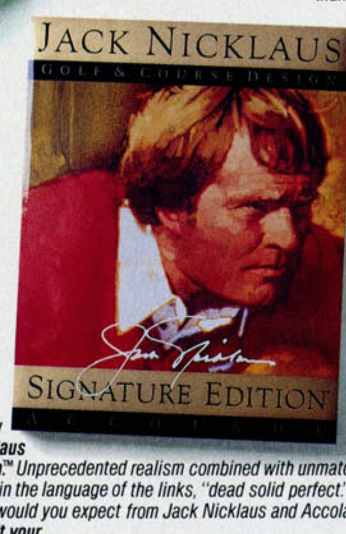
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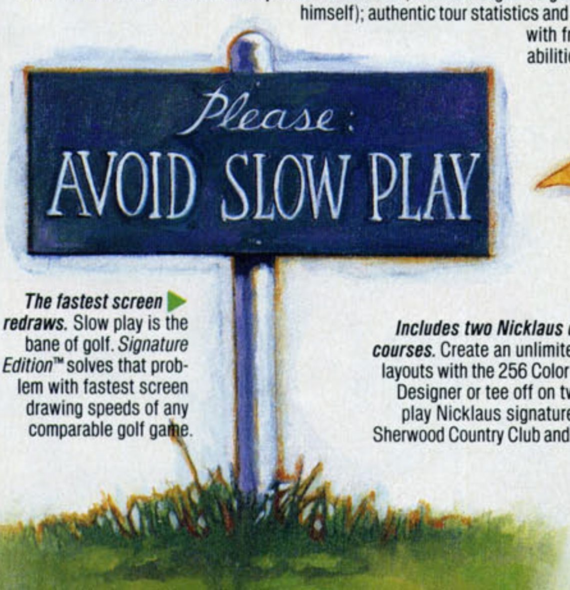




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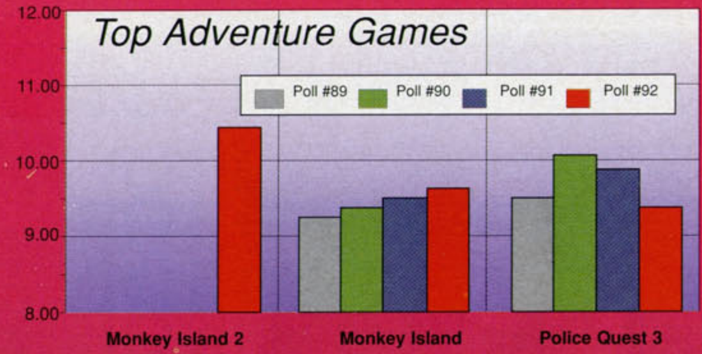
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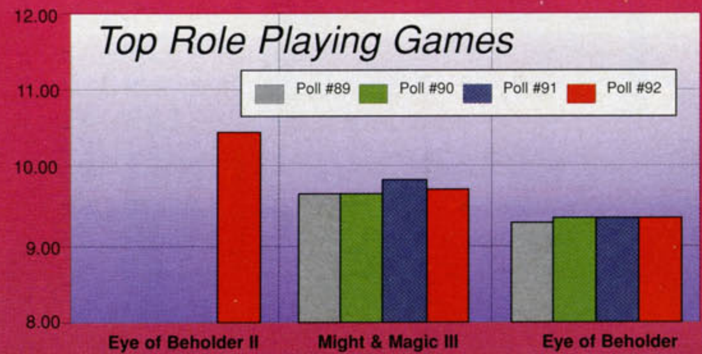
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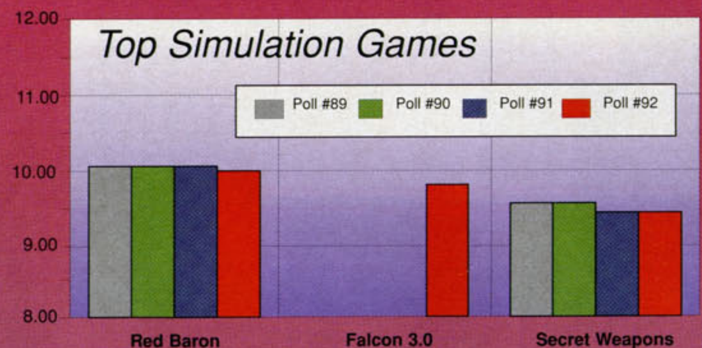
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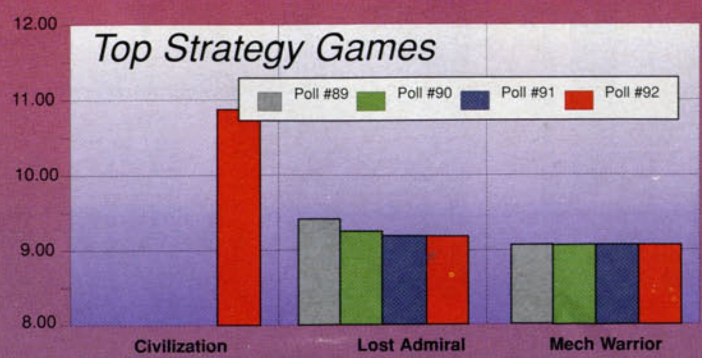
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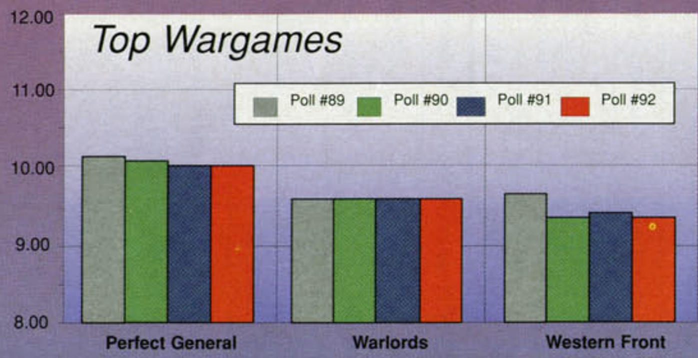


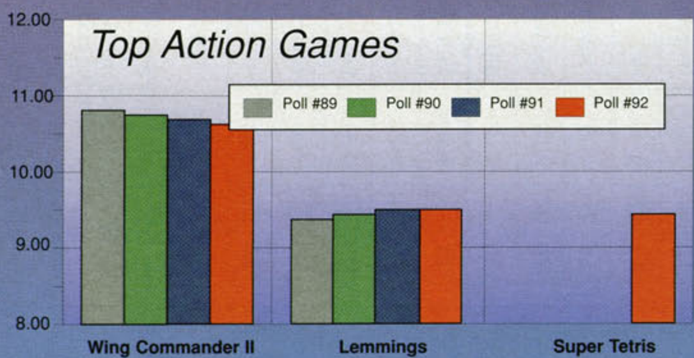


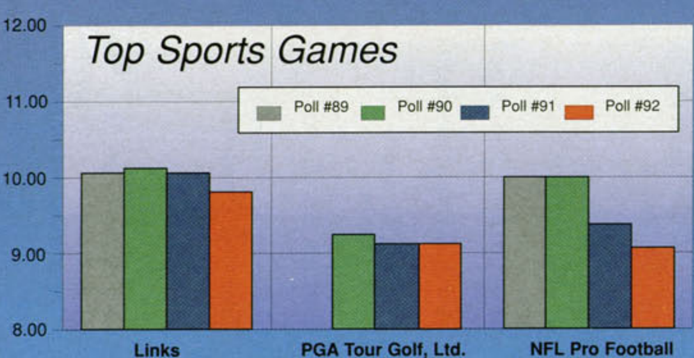


Top 100 Games

No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
1	Civilization	Microprose	ST	10.86
2	Wing Commander II	Origin	AC	10.65
3	The Secret of Monkey Island 2	Lucasfilm	AD	10.45
4	Eye of the Beholder II	SSI	RP	10.44
5	The Perfect General	QQP	WG	10.02
6	Red Baron	Dynamix	SI	10.01
7	Falcon 3.0	Spectrum HoloByte	SI	9.81
8	Links	Access	SP	9.80
9	Might & Magic III	New World Computing	RP	9.69
10	The Secret of Monkey Island	Lucasfilm	AD	9.61
11	Warlords	SSG	WG,ST	9.60
12	Lemmings	Psygnosis	AC	9.52
13	Super Tetris	Spectrum Holobyte	AC,ST	9.43
14	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe	Lucasfilm	SI	9.42
15	Police Quest 3	Sierra	AD	9.41
16	Eye of the Beholder	SSI	RP	9.34
17	Western Front	SSI	WG	9.32
18	King's Quest V	Sierra	AD	9.23
19	The Lost Admiral	QQP	ST	9.18
20	Wings	Cinemaware	AC	9.14
21	Second Front	SSI	WG	9.12
	Gunship 2000	Microprose	SI	9.12
	PGA Tour Golf	Electronic Arts	SP	9.12
24	Quest for Glory II	Sierra	AD,RP	9.11
25	Bane of the Cosmic Forge	Sir-Tech	RP	9.10
26	Mech Warrior	Activision	ST,SI	9.08
	Silent Service II	Microprose	SI	9.08
28	No Greater Glory	SSI	WG	9.07
	NFL Pro League Football	Micro Sports	SP	9.07
30	Battlehawks 1942	Lucasfilm	AC,SI	9.05
31	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	SI	9.04
	Red Storm Rising	Microprose	SI	9.04
	F-117A	Microprose	SI	9.04
34	Command HQ	Microplay	WG,ST	9.00
	Quest for Glory	Sierra	RP	9.00
36	Ultima V	Origin	RP	8.99
	The Adventures of Willy Beamish	Dynamix	AD	8.99
38	Space Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.98
39	Space Quest III	Sierra	AD	8.97
	Sword of Aragon	SSI	WG,ST	8.97
41	Powermonger	Electronic Arts	ST	8.96
42	Wasteland	Electronic Arts	RP	8.95
	Wayne Gretyzky Hockey II	Bethesda Softworks	SP	8.95
44	Pools of Darkness	SSI	RP	8.94
45	Overrun	SSI	WG	8.93
46	Falcon	Spectrum Holobyte	SI	8.90
	Rise of the Dragon	Dynamix/Sierra	AD	8.90
48	Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf	Accolade	ST	8.89
	Martian Dreams	Origin	RP	8.89
50	NFL Challenge	XOR Corporation	ST	8.87







51	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms	Koei	ST,RP	8.86
52	Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	SP	8.85
53	Populous	Electronic Arts	ST	8.84
54	Elvira	Accolade	RP	8.82
55	Might & Magic II	New World	RP	8.81
	Rules of Engagement	Mindcraft	ST	8.81
	Tracon	Wesson International	ST	8.81
58	The Magic Candle	Mindcraft	RP	8.80
	LHX Attack Chopper	Electronic Arts	AC	8.80
60	Gateway to the Savage Frontier	SSI	RP	8.79
61	Bard's Tale III	Electronic Arts	RP	8.77
62	Bandit Kings	Koei	ST,RP	8.75
	Heart of China	Dynamix	AD	8.75
	Martian Memorandum	Access	AD	8.75
65	Covert Action	Microprose	AC,AD	8.73
66	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	WG	8.72
	Battlechess	Interplay	ST	8.72
68	Breach 2	Omnitrend	ST,RP	8.71
	Starflight II	Electronic Arts	RP	8.71
70	Neuromancer	Interplay	AD	8.70
71	F-15 Strike Eagle II	Microprose	SI	8.69
72	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	WG	8.67
	Curse of the Azure Bonds	SSI	RP	8.67
73	Indiana Jones/Graphic Adv.	Lucasfilm	AD	8.65
	Ballistyx	Psygnosis	AC	8.65
76	Action Stations	RAW Entertainment	WG	8.64
	Conan the Cimmerian	Virgin	AC,RP	8.64
78	Armada 2525	Interstel	ST	8.63
79	Wayne Gretzky Hockey	Bethesda	AC,ST	8.62
	4-D Boxing	Electronic Arts	SP	8.62
81	Pool of Radiance	SSI	RP	8.61
	Les Manley in: Lost in L.A.	Accolade	AD	8.61
83	King's Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.59
	Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball	SSI	SP	8.59
	Wide World of Sports Boxing	Data East	SP	8.59
86	Buck Rogers: Countdown	SSI	RP	8.57
87	Chessmaster 2100	Software Toolworks	ST	8.56
88	Genghis Khan	Koei	ST,RP	8.54
	Megafortress	Three-Sixty	SI,ST	8.54
90	Future Wars	Interplay	AD	8.53
91	Panzer Strike	SSI	WG	8.51
	Leisure Suit Larry III	Sierra	AD	8.51
	Sword of the Samurai	Microprose	ST,RP	8.51
94	The Games: Winter Challenge	Accolade	SP	8.50
95	Savage Empire	Origin	RP	8.48
96	Champions of Krynn	SSI	RP	8.45
	Jetfighter II	Velocity	SI	8.45
98	Manhunter 2	Sierra	AD	8.42
99	Nobunaga's Ambition II	Koei	ST,RP	8.40
100	TV Sports Football	Cinemaware	SP	8.39

The Computer Gaming World Poll

A monthly survey of the readers of Computer Gaming World Magazine.

PC Research/ SPA Top Hits

January, 1992

Games (MS-DOS)

Rank	Title and Source
1	*Sid Meier's Civilization* (Microprose)
2	*Eye of the Beholder II* (Strategic Simulations)
3	*SimCity* (Maxis)
4	*SimAnt* (Maxis)
5	*Falcon 3.0* (Spectrum HoloByte)
6	*Police Quest 3* (Sierra On-Line)
7	*Leisure Suit Larry V* (Sierra On-Line)
8	*Mike Ditka Ultimate Football* (Accolade)
9	*The Secret of Monkey Island II* (Lucasfilm)
10	*Chessmaster 3000* (Software Toolworks)
11	*Flight Simulator 4.0* (Microsoft)
12	*Super Tetris* (Spectrum HoloByte)
13	*F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0* (Microprose)
14	*Links* (Access)
15	*King's Quest V* (Sierra On-Line)
16	*The Simpsons Arcade Game* (Konami)
17	*Twilight 2000* (Konami)
18	*Lemmings* (Psygnosis)
19	*Wing Commander II* (Origin)
20	*Robin Hood: Conquests of the Longbow* (Sierra On-Line)

Games (Amiga)

Rank	Title and Source
1	*Birds of Prey* (Electronic Arts)
2	*Populous II* (Electronic Arts)
3	*Conan the Cimmerian* (Virgin Games)
4	*Thunderhawk* (Virgin Games)
5	*Red Baron* (Sierra On-Line)

Home Education (MS-DOS)

Rank	Title and Source
1	*Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)
2	*Where in the U.S.A. is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)
3	*New Math Blaster Plus* (Davidson)
4	*Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* (Software Toolworks)
5	*Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego* (Broderbund)
6	*Reader Rabbit 1* (Learning Company)
7	*Reader Rabbit 2* (Learning Company)
8	*The Treehouse* (Broderbund)
9	*The Playroom* (Broderbund)
10	*Algeblaster* (Davidson)

This list is based on units sold by Software Etc., Babbages, Waldensoftware and Electronics Boutique. For more information, please contact PC Research at (703) 435-1025. CGW

Bo Knows Arcade Baseball

Data East's Bo Jackson Baseball

by Win Rogers





TITLE:	Bo Jackson Baseball
SYSTEMS:	IBM (reviewed) Amiga (forthcoming)
# PLAYERS:	1-2 plus league play
PRICE:	$49.95
COPY PROTECT:	Document Look-Up
DESIGNERS:	Nigel Spencer, James Maxwell, Larry Garner
PUBLISHER:	Data East San Jose, CA

Despite the hype and glitter associated with Bo Jackson's name, this is a good-looking and fast-paced arcade baseball game. Like Bo's baseball career, it rates high in enthusiasm and raw talent, but may never reach its full potential when it comes to the subtleties of baseball strategy. The game never quite lives up to the promise of its opening shot, a nostalgic view of Crosley Field with the lights coming on. Still, *Bo Jackson Baseball* will give plenty of satisfaction to those whose main interest in computer baseball is in lively action that will provide a challenging contest of eye-hand coordination. Very challenging. So challenging, in fact, that this middle-aged reviewer never learned to hit computer-opponent pitching, and had to admiringly watch his teen-age son do so. Fortunately, the pitches of real-life opponents are not so tough to hit as the computer opponent.

Starting Line-up

The game supports joystick or keyboard, but *not* a mouse. A VGA monitor, 640K and a processing speed of at least 10 MHz are required. It *can* be run from floppies but a hard disk is recommended. It supports a range of optional sound boards.

Printing support is weak. There is no way to print from within the program, although rosters and season stats can be saved to text files that can later be printed or loaded into word processing or spreadsheet programs. Box scores are *never* available.

Despite the claim on the box that this is "the most complete computer-baseball game ever developed," it is strongest as a straightforward arcade game and does not offer as many choices as do its best competitors. Its arcade action is challenging, and, since there is no "batting practice" or "pitching practice" module, one must learn the ropes in actual games. Since one's team changes sides every half inning, it is necessary to learn both batting and pitching skills at the same time. Unlike some games, there is no choice between easier or more difficult levels of arcade play and no choice as to whether to be responsible for fielding and base-running as well as batting and pitching. The player must go with a pitch-by-pitch simulation, and cannot choose the faster one-pitch-per-batter mode. There is no way to "manage only" and have the computer handle batter-pitcher matchups. Further, the annoying play-by-play announcer cannot be turned off, even by turning down the volume on your sound board, as the voice comes through the regular PC speaker.

Here's the Pitch (Game Play)

The arcade interface is impressive and effective. As batter, the player has a good look at the ball coming in. It is important to lay off obvious balls, and position in the batter's box is as important as the timing of the swing. To bunt, one holds down both joystick buttons and moves the joystick to one side or the other to direct the bunt toward first or third. As pitcher, the player watches a ball oscillating back and forth behind the plate, and pitch placement depends on where the ball is when the player presses the fire button. As the pitcher tires, the ball oscillates more rapidly, making it more difficult to get the ball over the plate. Speed is determined by the joystick's vertical orientation, and one curves the pitch by moving the joystick right or left after the pitch leaves the pitcher's hand. With a little practice one can develop a wicked late-breaking curve. The underlying statistics of batter and pitcher also affect the outcome of each at-bat.

The action goes forward on the gamer's choice of one of three imaginary playing fields. The players and playing fields are well rendered and attractive. It is always a challenge to convey the action of a baseball game on the small screen, as television directors know. Here, the focus is on the batter-pitcher confrontation, and if there is a runner at second you can see him behind the pitcher. If there is a runner on first or third a small window opens in one of the upper corners of the screen. After the ball is hit, the camera pans to follow the ball, and a small diagram shows where the baserunners are. The game is more forgiving of fielding errors than of batting or pitching weaknesses. Opposing baserunners did not take as many extra bases on this reviewer's shaky fielding skills as real players would.

The game supports "exhibition" and league games with the twenty-six teams provided. No stats are kept in exhibition mode and there must be one or two human players — there is no way to watch computer-versus-computer matchups. League games offer more variety. One can play any or all games in a predetermined full season and have the computer play the other games automatically and save their stats. It is possible to watch computer-versus-computer matchups in league mode, but it is not very entertaining. The game moves very slowly, one pitch at a time, and there is no way to interrupt the action to check rosters and second-guess strategy. There is no way to view a box score in either exhibition or league play. At any point in a season, it is possible to access a range of individual and team statistics.

The league replay capabilities are less useful than they would be if real player statistics were provided. **Data East** did not pay licensing fees to the Major League Baseball Players' Association and, therefore, cannot use current player statistics. The statistics they *do* provide are for a set of teams from Boston, New York, Kansas City and so forth, on some different planet (see sidebar). The utilities provided for playing simulated seasons, therefore, lose their *raison d'etre*. While one can program in current player stats or create customized rosters of imaginary players, who's going to bother? *Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball*, by contrast, lets you do that and more — play immediately with rosters of real (retired) major leaguers, buy a current player disk and

enter player stats with utilities that make it easy to generate ratings from the raw statistics. *Bo Jackson Baseball* is much less "complete."

The only active player whose real stats they could use, of course, was Bo Jackson. His actual 1990 Kansas City statistics (shown under the Chicago American League team) have been beefed up, and in this game Bo is the .300 hitter he has never been in the big leagues. Bo's computer imitation exceeds all his real 1990 statistics in all but two categories. The real Bo struck out 128 times, the simulated Bo only 20 times. The real Bo committed 12 errors, the simulated Bo (SimBo?) only three. The computer stadium provides a nice field of dreams for Bo.

Box Score

This game would have broader appeal if the designers had provided more options for the player who is actually playing the game, instead of all the faked statistics. A game that demands VGA and brags about its completeness should not give such a stripped-down, basic-model, take-it-or-leave-it feel. The IBM edition does not make particularly good use of the computer's capabilities, but seems like a practice round for its video game incarnation. Still, as a fast-paced arcade game, *Bo Jackson Baseball* provides some enjoyable, well-engineered features. **CGW**

Hedging Their Bets

Statistics-based baseball games and arcade baseball games both have enthusiastic fans who will gravitate either toward *Strat-O-Matic* (see p. 50) or *Bo Jackson Baseball*. Each game is successful at what it does best, will give hours of satisfaction to its proper fans and will intensely annoy those from the other camp. Each game has overreached in order to seek a wider audience and looks somewhat silly as it ventures too far from its real strength.

Cheerleaders at a Chess Match

Despite its messianic fervor about the purity of its statistical simulation, *Strat-O-Matic* hedges its bets with some audio and video enhancements. There is simple music, a siren sound and the imitation of an exploding scoreboard after a home run, as well as cartoon graphic stills that flash on the screen depicting "key plays."

The cartoons are crude monochrome sketches, comic relief from the intensity of the statistical recreation. They strike the same jarring note that cheerleaders would at a chess match. The audio and video effects are within the reach of a graduate of an elementary programming class and, as a result, the amateurish effects end up drawing attention to themselves and detracting from the integrity of the game. Fortunately, in keeping with the designers' philosophy of giving lots of choices to the gamer, any or all of them can be turned off.

Faking the Numbers

Not content with being a sleek, speedy arcade game, *Bo Jackson Baseball* bills itself on the box as "the most complete computer-baseball game ever developed." There are more statistics screens than action screens pictured on the box and the statistical portion of the game is, as a result, seriously overstated. **Data East** saved money by not paying licensing fees to Major League Baseball or the Players' Association and, therefore, cannot use real team nicknames or logos or active players' statistics. Instead of thinking through a reasonable alternative, as did *Earl Weaver Baseball* and *Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball* — neither of which paid a licensing fee on its basic game — *Bo Jackson Baseball* fakes it.

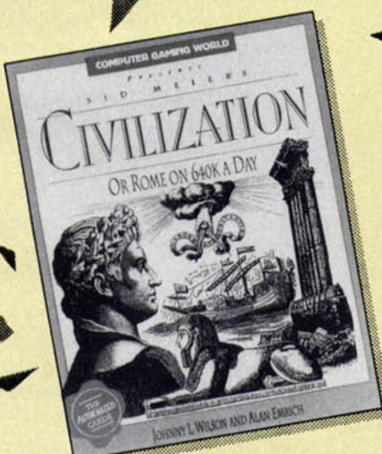
It offers twenty-six rosters divided into cities corresponding to the major league divisions, and stocks them with pseudonym-ed players. One cannot get the feel of really playing Atlanta against Minnesota because the teams have lost their individual character and been taken over by no-names. They didn't generate their no-name players from scratch, but enough changes have been made to the rosters that one cannot simply rename the players and end up with 1990 rosters. They gave St. Louis a 30-home-run center fielder, for example, who probably would have kept them out of last place if he had played for the real Cardinals. Statistics buffs may find that tracking down these changes is the most enjoyable part of *Bo Jackson Baseball*.

The CGW Book Store

presents

An Autograph Party!

To celebrate the release of our latest book: Sid Meier's Civilization or Rome on 640K a Day, we are holding a special Autograph Party in this issue of CGW. Johnny Wilson and Alan Emrich would be pleased to autograph all copies of Sid Meier's Civilization or Rome On 640K a Day sold through this special offer.



To receive an autographed copy of Sid Meier's Civilization or Rome on 640K a Day, your payment of $18.95 plus tax and shipping must be postmarked no later than May 31, 1992. Here are the details:

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From the Foreword:

Johnny Wilson and Alan Emrich have written this entertaining and fact-filled guidebook to explain everything, everything, you might want to know about Sid Meier's Civilization... This guide draws on interviews with us, the experience of many hundreds of hours of playing... it provides a detailed analysis of what is going on inside the game's program, and understanding of what to expect from the enemy artificial intelligence and a rich list of suggestions for improving your play.

We are pleased that both Johnny and Alan liked Civilization to the point of suggesting, researching, and writing this guide. It has something to offer everyone who owns the game and want to becomes a more informed player. We strongly recommend it.

Sid Meier and Bruce Shelley, creators of Sid Meier's Civlization

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Warning: *Although "The Scorpion's Tale" takes place in a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind, complete with a nice, cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games.* ***If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware!***

Scorpion's Tale

Lucasfilm's The Secret of Monkey Island 2



Well, the best part of the year is over; now all we have to look forward to is a lot of warm weather (sniff). Of course, winter will be back eventually, but it's a long haul between now and then. However, for those of you who actually like bright sun, blue skies and surf lapping at your toes, I hear the Caribbean is great this time of year....

Ah, the Caribbean. Palm trees. Soft breezes. Romantic nights under the stars. Pirates. Most especially, pirates. Yes friends, he's back! Our favorite buccaneer wannabe, Guywood Threepbrush — or is that Guybrush Threepwood — has returned for yet another thrilling installment in his "I wannabe a pirate" saga.

This time, with a slight difference. There are two ways to play *The Secret of Monkey Island 2*: "normal" mode and "light" mode. Light mode is about equivalent in difficulty to the first game. Normal mode is somewhat harder, and should give your brain cells a fair workout. That being the case, we'll just be looking at what goes on in normal mode, since the puzzles in both are similar, only more involved in the harder version.

Our boy starts off on lovely Scabb Island, which is currently under the thumb of Largo LeGrand. Largo used to be the right-hand man of the infamous LeChuck while LeChuck was still alive. Now he spends his days shaking down the washed-up pirates and other inhabitants on Scabb Island. Guy will have to get rid of Largo before he can leave for bigger and better things.

Besides, our hero just got his own shakedown, and all his cash has been snarfed by Largo. Nothing like a little revenge to provide extra incentive. After a quick tour of the island to find out what's where and who's who, it's time to get to work.

Work, in this case, means collecting the necessary stuff so the lady at the International House of Mojo can make a voodoo doll of Largo. Hey, no problem, right? How hard can it be, when Guy even has his little voodoo shopping list so he won't forget what to get.

Well, let's take a look. Hmm... something from the dead... yeah, easy one, if he can dig it. Something from the body? That one's no sp ... err, sweat. Ummm, something from the head. Now this one might be a little harder; Largo's not about to sit still for a haircut. Anything else? Just some clothes, and that's it.

Okay, time for another tour. All tours provide accommodations at four-star inns, but this one is maybe a half-star, and the only room belongs to Largo. Pity. Gee, I wonder how Guy could get in there. A little diversion, that's what we need. Alligators make good diversions, when you're sharp enough.

Say, this voodoo shopping isn't so bad after all; Guy is practically done. Now he just needs the clothes (funny how there weren't any to take in that room). However, Mad Marty, the local loony laundryman, belongs to the "no tickee, no washee" school, besides which, Largo has no clothes there anyway. Yet.

That should give our boy some ideas. If Guy could find a way of mussing Largo up (without getting *himself* mussed), he'd be halfway to his goal. That bucket hanging near the three pirates (who look *very* familiar, heh) might come in handy. Of course, something needs to be in the bucket, and the bucket needs to be in the right place. But hey, that much at least Guy can figure out for himself. He's probably swamped with bright thoughts about this.

With Largo disposed of (at least for now), our boy can leave the island. As soon as he has some cash, that is. Even a pirate has to do (or pretend to do) some honest work now and then. Rats!

And there's Captain Dredd. Aside from needing money to pay him, Guy also needs to give him something to replace Dredd's lucky sailing necklace. No problem, if Guy doesn't mind being heartless and light-fingered.

Finally! Now we're into the most involved section, the Four Map Pieces. Yep, Guy has to come up with a map showing the way to fabled Dinky Island, where there's supposed to be some fabulous treasure (Scorp checks the game box to make sure this is *Monkey Island II* and not *Ultima VI*; yep, it's *Monkey Island* all right). (Grin.)

Guy's gonna be doing a lot of breezing around the three islands (Scabb, Booty and Phatt) here. There's plenty of back-and-forth to get everything done, so we'll just hit the high spots and let Guy worry about the rest.

F'r instance, the antique shop on Booty Island. Lots of neat things to buy here, and the guy (note the small "g") who runs it even has a map piece. How convenient. Of course, he wants something in exchange for it. Oh well, maybe later.

Say, that mirror might come in handy. Too bad the parrot (no, that's not for sale) likes his image so much. Luckily, this parrot has a bird brain to go with his bird ego. The answer to this one is in the bag, sorta.

Oh no! ... look over there: Stan's Previously Owned Coffins! It's *him* again! Gaaah. And let's not ask how he got hold of those "previously owned" coffins. Guy will really have to hit the nail on the head this time (did you know Woody makes house calls when customers can't come to him? That's a hint, son). Ah, revenge is sweet. Hang out for a while and enjoy.

And the spitting contest. What would a pirate adventure be without that? Probably a lot less vulgar (heh). You've already figured out that Guy has to win it, right? Right! So, he needs to (a) work up a real-

ly good phlegm, (b) keep an eye on the wind and (c) (ahem) cheat a little (all in a good cause, naturally ... mail's in!).

The governor ... gosh, almost forgot about her. Yes, it's the same lovely lady Guy met and romanced last time out. Only things aren't so romantic anymore (hmm, Guy has almost as much trouble with his women as Leisure Suit Larry!). Anyway, our hero will have to get his hands on an invitation to her big bash before any reunions take place.

Actually, it's not so much the gov as the map piece that Guy wants. Not that he'll get far after he swipes it, but go ahead and do it anyway. Hmmm, so much for the big reunion. This just isn't Guy's lucky day, not when you think about what he'll have to do to get that map piece. The cliff part is no problem (wanna bet? or is that, winna bet?). As for the treehouse, well, just how did Guy get caught in the first place, eh?

Phatt Island isn't quite so congenial. You can tell right off by the "Wanted" poster with Guy's face plastered on it. Uh oh. Seems LeChuck's posted a bounty, and Governor Phatt (to call him obese



would be understatement) wants the cash. In no time at all, our hero is in jail.

Getting out is easy, with a little help from the anorexic dude in the next cell. Now Guy can go visit the library. Very helpful, that library, once he has a library card (don't leave Phatt without it). And don't overlook the lighthouse model.

But, there's still that wanted poster. Guy's picture is just, well, a trifle too obvious. Gee, if there were just some way to change that, somehow.

Phatt Island has a contest, too. A drinking contest, in fact. Has our boy found a way past the waterfall yet? No? Well, don't go bananas, find a monkey wrench and get on with it. A word of advice: the pirate's rum would knock out a bull elephant. If Guy has any smarts at all, he won't touch the stuff. Of course, he still has to win the contest. One guess as to how (yep, cheat!).

Been in any good crypts lately? Bet you're wondering how Guy can open the right one. I'll let you in on a little secret: he has to read a book — just don't quote me on that. Make a visit to IHOP ... err, IHOM, too.

Hey, look! Guy has all four pieces of the map. Unfortunately, our boy is no cartographer. Good thing he knows someone who is. Now, if Wally could just see again (this is called shedding a little light on the subject). While Wally works on the map, go ahead and do that little errand for him. After all, he's doing a favor for Guy. And when Guy gets back ... eek! Wally's *gone*! Uh oh, he's been kidnapped by LeChuck! Now what? No prob-

lem; stroll around the island, and something will turn up.

Before you can say "crates ahoy!" Guy is in LeChuck's secret fortress. Before you can say "oops!" Guy is captured — and strung up with Wally in the path of one of the zaniest Rube Goldberg death contraptions ever. It's a good thing villains always prefer elaborate death mechanisms to a simple bullet in the head or knife across the throat; otherwise, how would the good guys survive?

So now what? Well, I dunno about you, but I bet Guy isn't happy about this. Look at all the trouble LeChuck has caused — and it ain't over yet. Guy is probably mad enough to spit right about now. And if that leaves you in the dark, just lighten up for a trip that's a real blast.

Finally, Dinky Island ... and look who's here: our old buddy Herman Toothrot. Sorry to say, Herman's just making a cameo appearance; you can ignore the old coot and not miss anything. Ho hum.

This island's a weird place, especially the jungle. Kinda reminds you of a certain underground maze in a certain previous game (heh). Yep, Guy needs a little help here. Luckily, he doesn't have to deal with cannibals this time, just a parrot. Polly wanna cracker. Polly wants three crackers (hmm, almost as bad as a certain monkey in a certain previous game!). By the way, Guy can't get the hanging bag, but there's a way around this bottleneck, if he isn't afraid of being a little destructive.

Before you can say "buried treasure," our hero is digging at the "spot marked X" and finds himself hanging by a thread (rope, actually). Which doesn't last long, and there he is, in the dark again. Just move the cursor around the screen, *very* carefully and slowly (this one gave me trouble; I missed the necessary item more than once).

Ah, light. *Aiyeee!* LeChuck is there and he's holding a Guybrush Threepwood voodoo doll! Dum-de-dum-dum. (Gulp.) Is this it for our hero? Not quite (whew). LeChuck's doll is nasty, but it isn't final. Painful, yes, but all it does is kick Guy into another room at random.

So it's hide and seek time. Guy has to fight fire with fire, running around the small complex, grabbing anything that isn't nailed down (be sure to check *every* box in storage; they aren't all the same), to make his own LeChuck voodoo doll (and don't overlook the grog machine). Try to avoid the Big L as much as possible; he can't kill Guy, but he can slow him down.

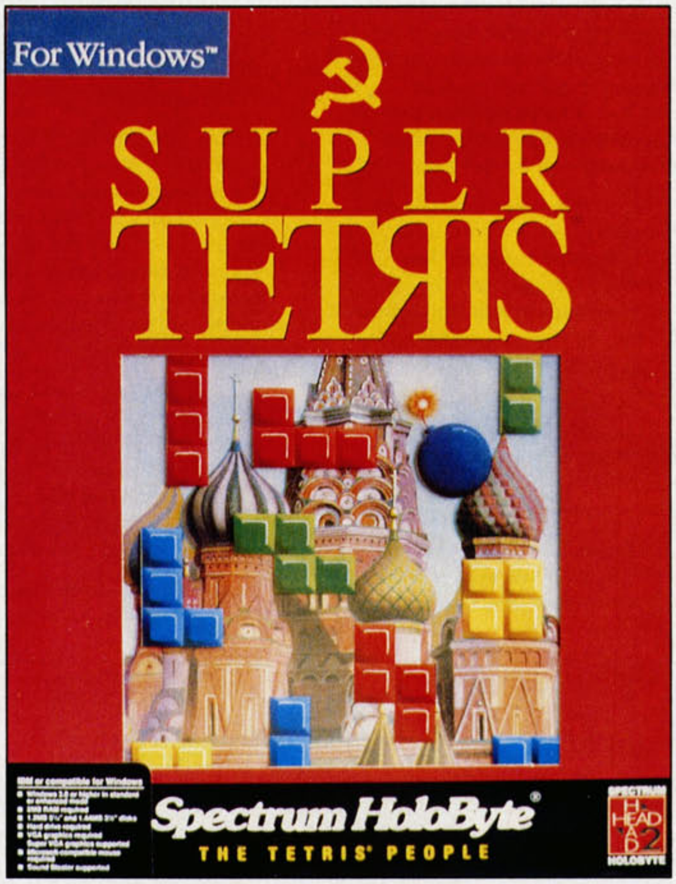
The big moment arrives. It's voodoo doll versus voodoo doll! Will Guywood triumph? Will he be rid of LeChuck once and for all? Will there be a third *Monkey Island*? Hey, don't ask *me*. *You* play the game and find out! (grin).

Well, I see by the old invisible clock on the wall it's that time again. Remember, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways: On **Delphi**: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On **GEnie**: Stop by the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By **US Mail** (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, P.O. Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! CGW

Call for *Super Tetris*

by Michael S. Lasky



Why don't they start a *Super Tetris* Anonymous group while they're at it? This fourth sequel to the original *Tetris* — considered justifiably as the most popular computer game ever published — is *that* addictive. True, *Tetris* is quite habit-forming — there's no denying that. Nevertheless, *Super Tetris* is *super* addictive, dangerously so. This review almost didn't get written. There was always just one more round of *Super Tetris* to play before starting to write. Hours and hours and many game rounds later, only the call of the absolute final deadline compelled this gamer to reluctantly quit, at least for a while.

Let Me Count the Ways

So, how could **Spectrum HoloByte** possibly improve on the original *Tetris* with a *fourth* follow-up? They accomplished this in a trio of ways. First, they enhanced the playing field. Now, instead of a gamer having to consider the square pieces falling from screen top, there is the addition of "debris" rising from the bottom.

Second, the game can be customized to each player's own configuration, be it keyboard, mouse, joystick or a combination of each. Third, with *Super Tetris* (as in *Wordtris*), competition amounts to more than just the player against the computer. There are competitive, cooperative and head-to-head player modes. All of these are two-player modes and allow a pair to play with or against each other on the same screen. (Head-to-head requires two computers with two registered copies of *Super Tetris* and either a null-modem serial cable or a **Novell** local area network.)

Finally, the designers have added lots of bells and whistles to make what was a simple game now ever more complex and fun. The playing field is 10 squares wide (16 wide in two-player games). As before, when a player forms a solid line of ten squares across, the line disappears. The difference is that now the cubes fall only 14 lines from the top of the pit, which, however, is 28 squares deep. The other 14 lines are the "rubble" below the middle "water line." The gamer's object is to get rid of that rubble. Sounds simple, right? Under *Tetris*' original rules, it would be. In *Super Tetris*, the player is limited at the start to 50 pieces. Because the pieces are made up of four squares in seven unique formations, the task is vexing, occasionally infuriating and always a challenge. Sometimes everything seems to come together like an easy jigsaw. On the other hand, there is always that rogue piece that botches everything up, or a gamer's aim isn't always what it could be, and what was the perfect piece lands the wrong way.

To the Height and Breadth and Depth the Rubble Doth Reach

At the start of the game, the space above the waterline is empty and the rubble below is exposed. Each time a line of rubble is completed, it rises one level toward the surface, slowly revealing a graphic design which is usually related to the painted background scene. The gamer's task is to clear all the rubble away and proceed to the next of ten succeeding levels of gradually increasing difficulty. To help one along, a graphic thermometer is present alongside the main playing field. This small replica of the entire pit lets the gamer see the design formed as lines of rubble are removed.

Further help (sometimes, a hindrance) to the player are the bombs earned with each line removed. A pair of bombs falls from the top when a line is completed. The bombs can be used to knock out the squares that are getting in the gamer's way. If multiple lines are completed and removed, the number of bomb clusters doubles (two lines gets four bombs; three lines, 8 bombs; 4 or more lines, 12 bombs). If the bombs happen to hit special treasure pieces buried in the rubble, a gamer's work becomes instant pleasure. There are random pieces with numbers from 5 to 15 on them. They earn one that many more pieces to play with than the original 50. A bubble square, when hit, rises to the top, filling all empty spaces with pieces until it reaches the water line. An anti-bubble piece moves upward, destroying all rubble and treasures in its way. Two bomb squares earn a player either additional bombs in the shape of the next piece or a three by three square explosion. The lightning square, when hit, removes the entire rubble line it is in.

Most of the time, the treasures and bombs work for the gamer. On occasion, they can make a mess of things. The player can manipulate the bombs like falling pieces, so good spatial relation skills are important, as is agility with the cursor keys or pointing device. While the mouse is best used for the beginning setup win-

Spectrum HoloByte's Super Sequel

TITLE:	Super Tetris
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNERS:	Gilman Louie, Alexey Pajitnov, Vladimir Pokhilko, Joel Powers and Les Watts
PROTECTION:	Document Look-Up
PUBLISHER:	Spectrum HoloByte Alameda, CA



dow, the keyboard arrow keys offer the most control during actual play.

The Ends of Being and Ideal Grace

Graphics are excellent and outright magnificent in the **Windows 3.0** version. While the program *does* work with CGA and Hercules graphics, those modes are not recommended. Both work in monochrome, offering fuzzy resolution. A four-color CGA version is available and costs another $9.95 through a mail-in offer. The background screens feature scenes from the Moscow Circus. In addition, sound cards are supported and offer intriguing Russian circus music. Those without sound cards hear only sound effects from their computer speakers.

One problem with *Super Tetris* is that it is a memory hog. The **Windows 3.0** version requires 2 MB of RAM; the regular IBM version requires 640k. This invariably requires that the game be booted on a "vanilla" system (one with no memory-resident programs). Of course, the *Windows* version does not have the same problem, since *Windows* has a memory manager to reconfigure to the game's needs.

Super Tetris gives sequels (game sequels at least) a good name. The movie *Rocky* lost steam in five outings; Jason got to kill and re-kill six times. *Tetris* has made it to number five and is aptly named, because this *Tetris* is *Super* indeed. **CGW**



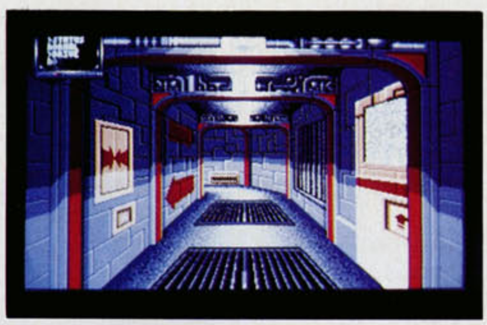
Over There

UBGs Rule OK!

by Paul Rigby



Daemonsgate I: Dorovan's Key



Suspicious Cargo

Daemonsgate I: Dorovan's Key, a new CRPG from the UK's **Imagitec** and published by **Gremlin**, has been described as an *Ultima*-beater by some observers. There is no doubt that there are many promising aspects to this game. Taking an *Ultima* viewpoint, the game takes the premise of a party searching the land and cities, as well as interviewing people, with the aim of defeating one of those UBG (Ultimate Bad Guy) chappies, in this case a long-dead deity. Besides the NPCs in each town there are 128 characters or groups of characters that act more intelligently than townspeople and serve as pivotal elements within the plotline. There is also a complex encumbrance system, a large number of objects that can be manipulated and several animated sequences that fill the details of the plot.

The magic system is divided into five "schools:" Hedge Wizardry, Elementalism, Daemonology, Spiritualism and Magick. Each school is the domain of different cultures. Also, each school requires different spell ingredients and rituals to perform that spell.

In combat, the player is tactical commander. He or she issues orders and allows the party members to interpret those orders (individual character personality has an effect, here). Opponents vary in their skill and aggressiveness.

Within the continent of Hestor, there are seven different cities (in addition to special locations such as castles, etc.), each with a map of over 10,000 screens in size. Each of these maps is divided into basement/sewers, ground floors, first floors, second and third floors of buildings. Each screen includes spot animation and each character can move in, under and behind objects. Inhabitants have, as in *Ultima VI*, a "life" of their own within their daily routine. Release is set for April for IBM (£39.99), Amiga and ST (both £34.99).

A text/graphic adventure by **Gremlin**, *Suspicious Cargo* is set in the near future against a background of space travel and mega-corporations. As a lethal virus spreads worldwide, several medically based corporations developed antidotes and, instead of racing to be the first to mass-produce it, acted together to protect and exploit their monopoly of the vaccine.

Thus, the corporations became rich and powerful and world governments eventually became puppets of the corporations. However, disagreement leads to infighting amongst the corporations and, eventually, all-out war. As part of its war effort, Universal Products, based on the Saturnian moon of Titan, are developing a mutant warrior via genetic engineering. To continue work, they must transfer the current work to Earth. This is illegal and dangerous, as other corporations would kill to get hold of the information the genetic work would present.

The only problem for UP is to find someone daft enough, someone with a lot to lose or *both* to ferry the goods to Earth. One plays Jonah Hayes, who is exactly the sort of guy UP turns out to be looking for. Smuggler and con-man, Jonah is behind on payments with his spaceship and is, well, desperate.

In a strange way, *Suspicious Cargo* (*SC*) is very similar to **Dynamix**'s *Rise of the Dragon* or a classic **Sierra** game. Sure, *SC* is a text/graphic adventure game and the others are pure graphic. However, both interrupt the gameplay with puzzle/arcade sequences. For the adventure purist, though, one can easily bypass these sequences with a simple mouse click on a menu choice.

The interface heavily disguises the text input. Generally, the screen looks very whizz-bang with three monitors that display digitized character portraits when they occupy the same location as the player. To the left are a bank of icons that allow alternative play via keyboard, mouse or both. On the upper portion of the screen are more buttons. A beeping sound signifies when they offer anything. One takes the player to an arcade sequence, another loads a graphic for a particular location and so on.

If a game called *Mortville Manor* rings



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* VCR-style "REWIND" option for keeping track of important clues and information
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Stolzenberg
Депутатовъ

a bell, prepare for nostalgia hour, because French outfit **Lankhor**'s *Maupiti Island* is very similar. Basically a whodunit-type mystery game (a kidnapping, in fact), this French game appears on two disks with the usual French manual we've all grown to love and hate. Apparently the game has been compressed onto only two disks to "reduce manipulations!" The essence of the game is to move from location to location interviewing the game's characters and searching, when no-one is about, the location itself.

When the player faces a character, one will be given a specialized set of menus. Questions cover a set of circumstances. For example, "What were you doing on blah, blah" or "What's your opinion of so-and-so." The usual of detective-type thing.

Over time, one can commit statements to memory (and/or make a few notes) so that, if any character contradicts him/herself, the player-detective can argue with the person. Available now on Amiga; other formats will follow.

Anco's latest in its *Off* series is *Tip Off*, an overhead-view basketball game for one, two or four players. *Tip Off* can be played under two options: arcade or coach. The latter features managerial/coach selections such as tactical coaching decisions, and the former allows the player, joystick in hand, to control each player on a particular team. Features include a two-tier practice mode for team or player. Other options include: toggling fouls on/off, altering the speed of play and differing quarter lengths. A *Tip Off* league can be constructed, including 16 teams. Out now on Amiga, *Tip Off* will compete on other formats at a later date.

Completing the trilogy of 3D action/adventures is *Mercenary III*, from British developer **Novagen**. For those who are unfamiliar with the Mercenary series, this game is a sort of political/military intrigue/trading/role-play/shoot-'em-up-type game (ahem). Playing a soldier of fortune with a mission to save civilization from the grasp of a despot, one also sets out to make a fortune. The player tours the solar system (19 worlds in all) in all of its polygon splendor, looking for clues and objects plus chatting to characters on different planets. There are six ways to solve *Mercenary III* — five of them are hinted at in the documentation. Out now for Amiga and PC.

Incidentally, anyone who would like to contact me can do so on **CompuServe** (75300,1503) or by mail to 20 Malvern Road, Liverpool, England, L6 6BW. Please include three international reply coupons if a reply is desired.

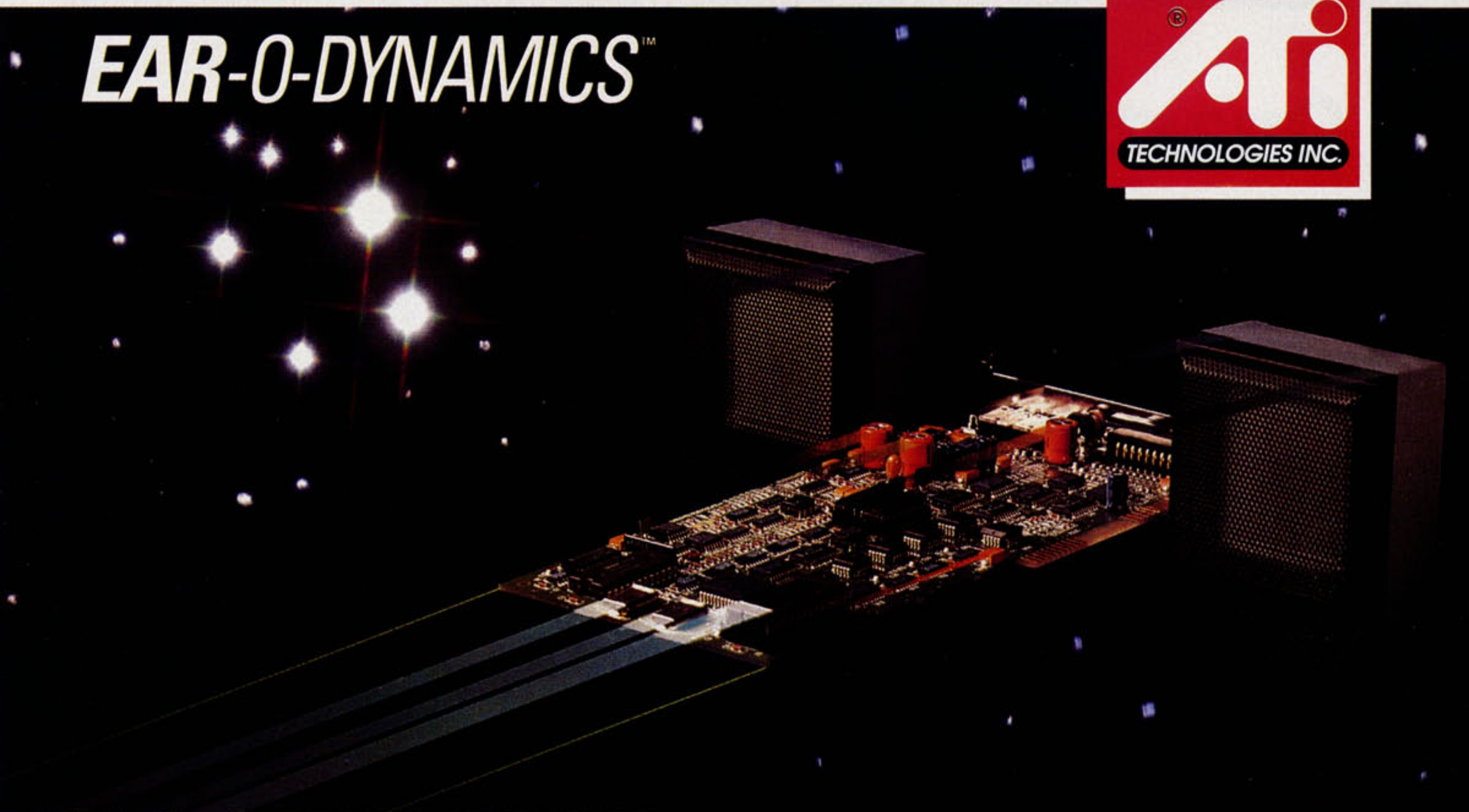
Note: The above games, and any of the other games mentioned in "Over There" in past issues, can be obtained from:

Computer Adventure World, 318 Kensington, Liverpool, England, L7 0EY; telephone: 01144-51-263-6306.

Premier Mail Order, Trybridge Ltd., 8 Buckwins Sq., Burnt Mills, Basildon, Essex, England, SS13 1BJ; telephone: 01144-268-590-766, fax: 01144-268-590-076.

Software City, Unit 4, BDC, 21 Temple Street, Wolverhampton, WV2 4AN; telephone: 01144 902 25304, 24-hour credit card hotline: 01144 902 25304.

All the above telephone numbers assume one can dial direct. In case of difficulty, contact the international operator. **CGW**



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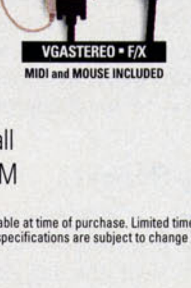
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Perfecting the PC

Quarterback Sneak Preview

Konami's NFL Football

by Wyatt Lee



Anyone who listens to "sports talk" shows on the radio is familiar with the oft-verbalized complaint that more attention is currently being paid to the *business* of professional sports than to the sports themselves. In a very real sense, the same can be true of the licensing of computer sports games. A publisher might license the use of a particular star's name, statistics and likeness, but not be able to use the uniform or logo most often connected with his team. Again, a publisher might opt to license the names and/or logos of the teams in a league, but not to pay the players' association for the rights to use individual names and statistics. Publishing a licensed game can be *very* expensive.

The expense of licensing rights from at least two different entities (a league and its players' association) is a primary reason for many publishers opting to release games with real franchises and All-Time Great team files or real franchises with phony player names and statistics. *NFL Football* from **Konami**, not to be confused with *NFL Pro Football* from **Micro-Sports** (not to be confused with **MicroLeague Sports**), allows gamers to coach "actual" franchises with authentic colored uniforms and logos, but uses "fictitious" players. Instead of extrapolating abilities from raw statistics, these fictitious players are crafted using ten different attributes on a scale between 01-100. The attributes are: intelligence, speed, agility, endurance, tackling, blocking, catching, throwing, kicking and (proneness to) injuries. In addition, the height, weight, age and experience for each player tends to weigh in. Naturally, a gamer could feasibly edit his or her favorite teams to reflect the actual rosters, but it is far more difficult to subjectively weigh these attributes and assign values to them than to type in statistics from sources which are readily available.

In sports games, one generally associates these fictitious rosters with those products which are heavily action-oriented: *TV Sports: Football*, *Mike Ditka Ultimate Football*, *NHL Hockey* (on the **Sega**) and *Hardball II*. Nevertheless, *NFL Football* seems to go against the grain in that while it is extremely satisfying as a *strategy* game, it does not succeed quite as well as an action game. It is a hybrid game that could have been well received by statistics buffs if it had actual football players represented or welcomed by action players if it required more exacting input. To put it simply, *NFL Football* has the right engine to be a very satisfying statistics-based strategy game. In actuality, it is more like a **Sega Genesis** sports game that takes advantage of the personal computer's strengths.

Scouting Report

The strengths of *NFL Football* include: its accessible interface (although the kicking is not intuitive), the delightful graphic and aural chrome, the capacity for customizing players, the ability to create one's own playbook and a design that enables one to coordinate league play, as well as accumulate and analyze statistics. The only quibble this writer can find with the pre-production version previewed here is that the game's strengths are somewhat undermined by the abstracted players. Nonetheless, *NFL Football* should find a fanatical contingent of boosters within the world of computer gamedom.

The interface is driven by the number pad. Gamers function as coaches by calling plays from up to three on-screen pages of eight plays each. The clock is ticking away during this segment to keep things moving and one who thinks too long before acting will certainly run the risk of being called for delay of game. Once the play is called, the gamer is given visual cues as to which players he/she can control. A target appears to show where the ball is expected to land; a square surrounds an on-screen player that can be controlled by the gamer; a circle tips off the location of the ball carrier (for purposes of defense) and a triangle identifies the primary receiver (for a passing play).

At the line of scrimmage, gamers can use the keyboard to call audibles, select players to control, put offensive players in motion or, of course, snap the ball. The only potentially confusing part of the interface is the kicking game. *NFL Foot-*

ball uses a double power bar for the kicking game. One must hit the **Enter** key when the power bar shows the amount of strength to be put into the kick and hold down on the key until it reaches the center of the bar representing left/right aim. This writer feels there is very serious doubt he will *ever* be a placekicker in *NFL Football*.

After the ball is in play, the interface alternates between the use of the + key and the **Enter** key in order to do everything from calling fair catches and performing flying tackles, pitch-outs, laterals, passes, diving, jumping, etc. In short, the action controls for *NFL Football* look like the game could easily be ported to one of the 16-bit cartridge systems (probably the **SNES**) in a very short time.

A Whistle on the Play

The chrome for *NFL Football* is especially delightful. The graphics are excellent (although the players are not quite as large as those in *Mike Ditka Ultimate Football*, they are larger than those in *NFL Pro Football*) and feature fast-moving players, as well as fluttering penalty flags. When a penalty is called, a



window (about one-quarter screen size) pops up and a referee gives the appropriate signal, plus gives the call in digitized speech (it even sounds good on the IBM's internal speaker). It also offers options for turning the play-by-play text descriptions on or off. Further, it allows one to print out and compare the statistics generated through league play as the gamer plays through the season on what the game calls the "Road to the Super Bowl."

Post-Game Show

One of the most surprising aspects of the game for this writer was the fact that it took statistics seriously. It allows one to accumulate and print out league, team and individual statistics, as well as to compare the performance given by a player during a given game with the player's cumulative statistics to that point. One would not have expected a game that did not depend upon authentic rosters to afford such in-depth statistics keeping. In addition, *NFL Football* offers 19 different team statistics respectively for each team involved in a given game.

NFL Football is a slick product. Though it might have been tempting for **Distinctive Software, Inc.** to rush this product after their acquisition by **Electronic Arts**, it is a product which reflects care and craftsmanship. If data disks with actual player statistics/files ever become available, this will get plenty of playing time at the Wyatt Lee Dome (-icile). Even without the actual rosters, however, it may be the ideal game for those who want some strategy, some action and enough fast, colorful animation to keep the most faithful football addict supplied with adrenalin until the actual NFL season returns. **CGW**

Conversions Received

Castles **(Interplay) Amiga**

Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus **(Accolade) Amiga**

Gateway to the Savage Frontier **(SSI) Amiga**

Harpoon Battleset 4: Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf **(Three-Sixty Pacific) IBM**

Leisure Suite Larry 1: In the Land of the Lounge Lizards **(Sierra) Amiga**

Obitus **(Psygnosis) IBM**

Panzer Battles **(SSG) Amiga**

PGA Tour Golf Tournament Course Disk
(Electronic Arts) Amiga

SimAnt **(Maxis) Amiga**

Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers **(Sierra) Amiga**

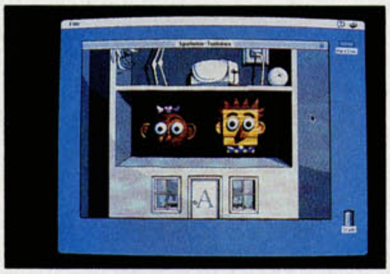
The Great Underground Educator

Broderbund's Spelunx and the Caves of Mr. Seudo

by Robert Howell

TITLE:	Spelunx and the Caves of Mr. Seudo
SYSTEMS:	Macintosh Plus, SE, SE/30, II Series, Classic, and LC with 2 MB of RAM, Hypercard 2.1 and System 6.0.7 or higher
PROTECTION:	None
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Cyan
PUBLISHER:	Broderbund Novato, CA





While the words "wow," "neat" and "awesome" are not generally applied when reviewing, they are words which were universally applied when the player was a member of the 8-12 age group and exposed to *Spelunx* for the first time. Just what provokes this response varies from player to player. It may be the graphics on the opening screen, one of the numerous science experiments that can be performed or perhaps one of the available drawing/animation programs. Whatever the cause, soon after the opening screen gives way to game screens, the player becomes involved in all sorts of topics — from science to music to simple programming.

Spelunx is by **Cyan**, the developer of *Cosmic Osmo* and *The Manhole*, and is marketed under the **Broderbund** label as a part of their *Kids Club* software line. It is a learning experience program that defies categorization. Its discovery approach to learning is not novel, but it is well-written and entertaining. The program's basic premise is to explore a series of caves that was built by Professor Spelunx and filled with inventions by his best friend, Mr. Seudo. Upon entering the gates to Spelunx, the player finds an elevator that leads downward to the caves. As the elevator descends, the player gets a fleeting glimpse of a flickering lantern, which serves notice that color may play an important part in the explorations. Then the elevator doors open, a small inset map appears and the adventure begins.

There are three rooms, or areas of exploration, connected by tunnels. Each area is named for a character in literature: the Nemo room from Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*, Arwen for the elf woman in *The Lord of the Rings* and Tumnus for the little faun in the first book of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Each contains an assortment of games, experiments and other activities that may not be readily apparent.

Cosmic Nemo

The Nemo room contains an observatory from which planets and moons in the solar system can be observed and even manipulated. Another aspect of this room is a small computer that allows the player to change the telescope view using grid coordinates. For the enlightened explorer, a secret level of this room gives access to other activities. A painting gives information on size comparison with objects in the solar system and is accompanied by a book with information on the planets. Other books include a history of *Spelunx* and a diary (which can be "locked"), in case the player wishes to record his adventures. Here, the player can also try his hand at making coffee or performing gas/light experiments. There is a drawing program, complete with memory, which records each brush stroke (even mistakes). The drawings are stored on "RAM" cartridges in much the same manner as one records on a tape recorder. There is even a painting with interactive parts and a lively little character for use in stories made up by the player. Finally, if the player diligently explores every nook and cranny, the reward includes some breathtaking graphics (breathtaking in their sudden appearance after so much black and white), as well as another science experiment — one involving gravity and the speed of sound.

Animating Arwen

The Arwen room begins with a teapot that leads to a forest and a stump, and that is where the player remains unless he or she is able to find the right buttons to push. Fortunately, they are not that hard to locate and there will soon be three lights beckoning in the distance. One light leads to the Pigtoad tree, which contains a Polka Machine. This little machine has two components: a cartoon character who can be programmed to dance using simple pictures, and a music maker with various sound effects and an accordion-like rendition of three major and four minor chords. Each component can work independently, but can also be synchronized for a rudimentary audio/visual presentation. Another light brings the player to a Tree Gene-orator. Here the player can design his own plant using several choices within the framework of four different variables. The process does take a long time and, depending upon what is selected, is best left and returned to later in the session. The third light in the Arwen room leads the player to an animator that allows the player to choose from different pictures and then stamp them onto a picture area. The animate button allows the pictures to be stamped and erased, giving the illusion of motion. The pictures are then saved on a "RAM" cartridge and can be played back or edited.

"Tumnus, Go Clean Up Your Room!"

The Tumnus room opens into what appears to be a child's playroom. On the left is a terrarium, in the center, a set of building blocks, and on the right, a doll standing on what appears to be a mountain. None of these are quite what they appear to be. A closer inspection of the terrarium reveals a temperature control, a small cave and some marble-shaped objects that, when dropped into the terrarium, turn out to be food. By manipulating the temperature controls and using the food pellets, the player can make some interesting observations on the feeding habits of lizards. The building blocks aren't really building blocks in the

traditional sense. They contain words with diacritical markings that can actually be heard through the speaker if placed in the right positions. The doll on the mountain turns out to be a tiny Swiss yodeler who drops a piece of bread. It is the player's job to catch the bread in a toaster which appears when the mouse is moved and bounce the toast back up to the yodeler. It is a rather simple game and one of the few in *Spelunx* which seems to have no apparent concept behind it.

Another feature of this room is a combination doll house and storage area with *still more* activities. On the top shelf, the player finds a curious looking bird, a toaster and an orange. With just a few clicks of the mouse, the player suddenly finds a small viewer that reveals much more than the naked eye can see. The second shelf contains two puppet heads that one small observer immediately connected to the *Sesame Street* characters Bert and Ernie. While that connection was not as readily apparent to this reviewer, their function did prove to be one of the few aspects of *Spelunx* that could not be fully explored. According to the accompanying guide, these puppet heads can be made to talk, using a built-in microphone or another sound input such as MacRecorder to perform puppet shows.

On the bottom floor of the doll house was a sandbox that should appeal to every child who ever tried to torment an ant as it went about its normal routine. The sandbox contains two ants, two ant holes, rocks, food pellets and a slightly mysterious corner with what appears to be two eyes peering outward. Another activity found in the Tumnus room is a lightning maker. This device allows the player to perform sound/light/distance experiments which easily lend themselves to comparisons of the relative speeds of light and sound.

This is a rather simplistic view of the caves and is only the beginning of the real adventure. Hidden in one of these rooms is a clue which will enable the player to enter an area where new rooms can be constructed and the entire layout of *Spelunx* altered to the preferences of the player.

Spelunx is entertaining and has educational value. It is not, however, without drawbacks. Chief among these are hardware requirements. While it will run on a system with 2 megabytes of memory, it needs 4 megabytes for best results. It requires at least 8 MB of space on a hard drive for installation, though eventually this can be reduced to 4.5 MB. It also requires HyperCard 2.1 and System 6.0.7 or higher. Fortunately, HyperCard 2.1 comes with the program and older versions are easily upgraded. *Spelunx* is compatible with System 7.0, but with some restrictions on using MultiFinder. Another drawback is an annoying message which may appear if the player returns to a previously visited room during the course of a session. Some graphics and activities will not work again unless the game is restarted. Finally, this program loses much of its appeal without color. While most screens are in black and white, the activities and experiments are very much enhanced by having a color system.

While the program is listed for ages 5 and up, it is probably better suited to age groups for which reading is no barrier. It should provide hours of entertainment in a variety of ways for both children and adults. That is the real strength of this program — it has a little something for almost everyone. **CGW**



From the Cockpit

"Ducking" for Coverage: New Flight Simulator Software from Mallard

by Timothy Trimble

It's been almost three years since the last release of *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. During this time, there have been many advances in the design of simulation software — three-dimensional solid polygon graphics, sound board support, 256 colors and CD ROM (Compact Disk). **Microsoft** is undoubtedly slaving away at implementing their own magical technology into the next version of the premier flight simulator on the market. In the meantime, however, the folks at **Mallard Software** (with some help from **The Bruce Artwick Organization, Ltd.** and **RMM Consulting**) have come up with some interesting products to satisfy the needs of armchair pilots until that long-awaited day when **Microsoft** unveils the multimedia version of their flagship entertainment product.

Sound, Graphics, Aircraft Update

The *Sound, Graphics & Aircraft Upgrade* (*SGA*) is being marketed as an upgrade for *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, since it improves the basic flight simulation product by adding support for better graphics, sound, voice, and additional aircraft. *SGA* is a great relief for any armchair pilot who has grown weary of listening to the internal IBM speaker while flying *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. With the addition of digital sound samples and synthesized sound, the sense of realism has been greatly enhanced. Some of the new sounds include the engine noise (prop and jet), gear up/down, flaps up/down, a great crash sound sequence, and of course, the sound of the wind rushing over the plane. There is also an altitude alarm for those armchair pilots who tend to forget when to put down the gear. The cards supported by *SGA* are the **ATI Sound F/X**, **Ad Lib**, **Covox**, **Sound Blaster** and **Sound Blaster Pro**. The **Sound Blaster** cards will even allow more advanced users to replace the default sound effects with their own digital recordings via the use of the *Sound Blaster Voice Editor*.

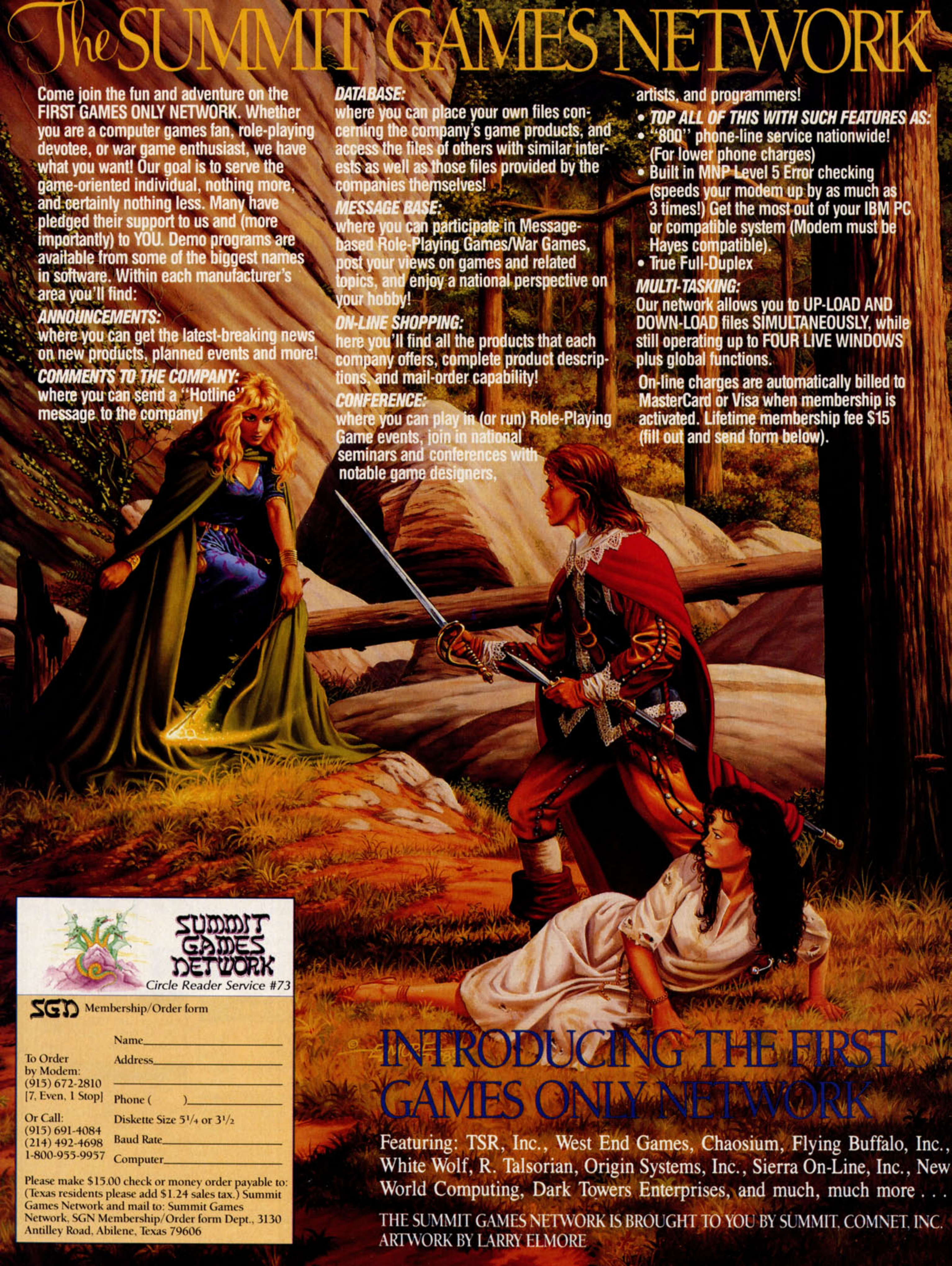
The *SGA* graphics drivers will allow the use of an enhanced instrument panel and the infamous 747 "Glass Cockpit" instrument panel. The enhanced instrument panel provides extra functionality that is not available with the standard instrument panel, such as a fuel pump, pitot tube switch, a timer (for helping to calculate "true" ground speed) and an altitude alert that can be set for various altitudes. The instrumentation is arranged in a more realistic manner, which will require a little getting used to. ("Let's see, where did that magnetic compass go?") The 747 Glass Cockpit instrument panel uses computer display terminals to relay flight information to the pilot via an Engine Indicating and Crew Alerting System (EICAS). This system will supply engine, navigation, radio and checklist information. Both of these cockpits can be used with any type of aircraft. ("Hum! A Glass Cockpit in a Cessna 182!")

Speech is also supported with *SGA* via the Sound Blaster and Sound Blaster Pro cards. The ATIS (Automatic Terminal Information Service), ATC (Air Traffic Control), demonstration messages and flight instruction messages that are normally displayed by scrolling across the screen are replaced by synthesized speech. The synthesized speech is computer-generated and can sometimes be difficult to understand, especially for a novice armchair pilot unfamiliar with flight controller messages. The settings of the **Sound Blaster** cards can be adjusted to the pilot's liking. Although digitized speech (pre-recorded speech) would sound better, it does require a large amount of memory and would take away from the performance of the flight simulation itself. Still, this is a great improvement over having to read the messages and it adds to the overall realism of *Microsoft Flight Simulator*.

Since *Microsoft Flight Simulator* is a very memory-intensive application, some adjustments must be made to configure both the basic program and the *SGA* for the most efficiency, *especially* if the *Microsoft Aircraft and Scenery Designer* is already installed. The best PC configuration would be the use of DOS 5.0 and then trimming the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT to allow as much conventional memory as possible. Limiting the use of the map window and the second 3-D window will also yield better results. (By the time of the printing of this article, **Mallard Software** will have a newer version of the software available that addresses some of these memory issues.) Although the *SGA* software is a great addition to *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, the documentation is a bit on the thin side and could use more detail and pictures to describe the instrumentation of the enhanced cockpits.

Flight Planner

The *Flight Planner* is intended for the armchair pilot who always seems to have a tough time finding out where to go and how to get there (which may be just about everyone). The *Flight Planner* is a course planning and plotting package that will compute the flight course and associated information and then print it out. This allows armchair pilots to have a "custom" flight map to follow. The concept itself is simple — put in the origin airport followed by the destination airport,



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and *Flight Planner* will calculate the entire flight plan.

It will also factor in wind effects and the time required for climbs and descents. The flight plan can be generated either automatically or manually. The manual approach will allow the armchair pilot to select specific VORs (Very high Omnidirectional Range navigation transmitter) or airport refueling points for the flight path.

Once a flight plan has been generated, it can be printed out. The printout can contain the map outline (USA), navigation and communication radio frequencies, airport information, estimated time en route, distance, inner/middle/outer marker beacon distances and much more. Extra space is also available for recording actual time en route and other information. This flight plan can also be displayed to the screen instead of printing. Another nice feature of the *Flight Planner* is the ability to generate **CompuServe** Fly-In format reports for printing or uploading to the FSFORUM (Flight Simulation Forum).

The *Flight Planner* comes with all of the airports and navigational aids that come with *Flight Simulator*. Due to the extensive of new scenery, navigation points, and airports that can be added via ASD, the *Flight Planner* will also allow the editing of the database that contains all of the required information.

There are a lot of additional features of *Flight Planner* that help to make the task of planning a flight a lot easier. A wind correction computer will calculate the proper heading to fly for maintaining a planned course. The landing rollout utility will compute the amount of runway that will be needed for landing.

Temperature effects on the planned takeoff can be calculated to make sure that there is enough runway to get off the ground. The turn performance calculator will give the armchair pilot a good idea of what angle of bank can be handled at certain speeds without worrying about stalling the aircraft. An Aircraft Specifications Library is included for storing and editing information on aircraft specifications.

Two versions of *Flight Planner* come in the same package — one for DOS and one for *Microsoft Windows*. The version for *Windows* has more features and provides support for pasting flight plan graphics into a word processor or drawing program for making modifications. The documentation for *Flight Planner* is very complete and comes with good illustrations for showing the reader what to expect. The only thing not included is a knee-mounted clip board for clipping down the printed flight plans and maps (grin).

Summary

Overall, the **Mallard** *SGA* and *Flight Planner* provide more realism and are great additions to the library of any armchair pilot who likes *Microsoft Flight Simulator.*

So until next time, this is Timothy Trimble, From the Cockpit, somewhere in a major cloud bank over Southern California. ("Where did I put that map?") Mallard Software, Inc. can be contacted at:

Mallard Software
550 Edmonds #201
Lewisville, TX 75067 **CGW**

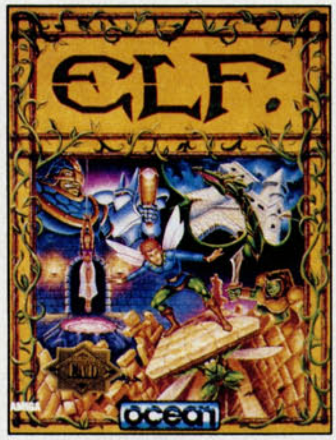
To the Guillotine We Will Go

Elf *from Ocean Software*

by Leah Wesolowski

TITLE:	Elf
SYSTEM:	Amiga
PRICE:	$49.95
PROTECTION:	Documentation Look-Up
PUBLISHER:	Ocean San Mateo, CA





The developers at **Ocean** have a real bloodbath on their hands with their new game, *Elf*. The player, as Cornelius, embarks upon a lone crusade to rescue the proverbial damsel in distress, Elisa. Fighting through levels of forest, jungle, icelands and castles that are filled with many different types of creatures is no laughing matter. In fact, on the scale of death and destruction, this game gets a *ten* for blasts per minute and a big *zero* for depth and plot. The simplest analogue for this non-addicting game is that of an ordinary **Nintendo** game, leaving much to be desired.

The player controls a little elf capable of shooting fireballs from his clenched fist (when the average elf inherited this ability is unknown to this reviewer). Targets range from little beetles to stinging wasps, guardians to psychotic mages, ice monsters to the Evil Necrilous. The player must kill or be killed. At least the game requires the player to take care, lest he or she accidentally shoot the good creatures, such as the little bunnies hopping through the trees or the fluttering butterfly who seems to ride the tailstream of the menacing wasp. While the task of killing off the dangerous creatures is generally not difficult, it is made nearly impossible at times by the sheer number of foes to be found in the game.

After a kill is made, a trinket may be left behind by the dearly departed. Things such as little green gems are of key importance to successful completion of the game. Creatures sometimes drop hearts, which offer the player a health boost (often a lifesaver in a particularly fierce battle). Other trinkets are saved until the player reaches the end of a level. At that time, they are counted up and added to one's score as bonus points. The player is awarded a new life when 100,000 points are obtained.

Scavenger Hunt

Scattered throughout the forest are items (such as bird feed) and herbs that the player must gather in order to complete the game's mission of love. Items like the bird feed can be given to a character in order to obtain some other item (in this case a feather) or to open the way to the next level. Some of the items seem useless at first, but their usefulness becomes apparent at later stages.

Picking up an item is accomplished by walking over it. Giving items to an active character is done while in the "interaction" menu. The interaction portion of the game is controlled via the joystick and blends well with the game design.

The herbs that are found on the eight levels of this game are saved until such time as the player finds his way to the local shop. There, herbs and "pets" are traded for abilities, health and advice. A force-field can be purchased to forestall an untimely death. The player may also purchase a hero and a wolf to accompany the Elf on his/her quest. One other item worth mentioning is the "flying machine." This contraption allows the player to fly from point to point and saves a lot of time lost when fighting off hordes of little dopplegangers.

A word about copy protection is appropriate here. The game utilizes the list of different herbs required for a particular ability or special purchase to implement its form of copy protection. At the start of the game, the player is prompted to eliminate from the screen all those herbs not required to purchase a given item from the shop. That done, the player then may proceed to the game. Unlike many copy protection schemes, this one is easy to use and should not be a deterrent in deciding to purchase this game.

Elven Interface

In *Elf*, just about everything is accomplished with the joystick, except the commands to pause, quit, use the force-field and save the game. The player must complete level one to be able to save the game. The game save ability is also a saving grace for *Elf*.

The start game screen allows the player to choose music or effects. If music is chosen, the player will be delighted with a score second only to the tunes in *Elvira*. However, the ending sequence, which occurs when the player is destroyed, is, in this reviewer's opinion, in poor taste. The ending sequence is the silhouette of the Elf having his head severed by a guillotine as mad laughter rings in the players ears. If effects are chosen, the end sequence is done away with and sound effects replace the music.

Hints to Save the Maiden Fair

The best advice this reviewer could give to the player of *Elf* is to pick up *everything*. It may look like a rock, but chances are it is an uncooked chicken and the player will need it. The flying contraption is a good goal for the player to save up for. When interacting with the various active characters in *Elf*, try everything on the list. Most of all, though, the best advice this reviewer can give is to *keep* firing.

Off With Your Elven Head!

In all, this reviewer didn't care much for **Ocean**'s *Elf*. Perhaps its true market would be found in the **Nintendo** section at K-Mart. This game's shoot-'em-up style, the less than challenging puzzles and its joystick-only interface (so typical of European Amiga programming) do not take advantage of the Amiga's capabilities. While the musical score is nice, it does not make up for *Elf*'s lack of finesse. Perhaps a trip to the guillotine is fitting for this *Elf*. **caw**

Scorpion's View

Strategic Simulations Inc.'s Buck Rogers: Matrix Cubed

as told by Scorpia



Scorpia is an experienced and respected adventure game expert. CGW is pleased to be able to provide this forum for her distinctive and often controversial perspective.

Second in the *Buck Rogers* series, *Matrix Cubed* revolves around what is basically the scientific equivalent of the philosopher's stone: the transmutation of elements. This time out, however, it's not so much a matter of stopping the bad guys from developing a super weapon as it is keeping them from getting their hands on the info in the first place. NEO, you see, already has the plans. For once, the good guys are a half step ahead of the evil-doers.

In order to stay ahead, and actually create the Matrix, NEO needs the help of a couple of scientists, and that's where your team comes in: tracking down these people and persuading them to work for NEO. As you might expect, this will be the usual hard task, with plenty of opposition along the way, as well as a few side trips here and there.

You have the standard team of six, either newly created or transferred from *Countdown to Doomsday*. I strongly recommend bringing over the party from the previous game if at all possible. They will cross with *all* equipment intact and you'll be needing every piece of it. Heavy firepower is the name of the game here.

If you're developing a team from scratch, you won't start with much in the way of arms and armor, but you can make up the difference by looting the bodies of defeated opponents. Be sure that everyone in the party carries at least two different types of hand weapons; not all weapons work against all types of opponents. Microwave guns, for instance, are virtually useless against anyone (or thing) with armor, but they do quite well against unarmored critters.

Heavy ordnance — rocket launchers, plasma throwers and explosive grenades — are the best weapons in the game, and you will be using them a lot (or you will if you want to get through the combats quickly and with minimal damage). Everyone should carry a grenade launcher and explosive grenades. Also stock up on chaff grenades; they will keep your enemies from using the same weapons against *you*.

In terms of skills, you absolutely need Pilot Fixed Wing. Without that, you can't finish the game. If no one has that skill, start building it up right away. If someone already has it, pump it up at every opportunity.

Near the end of the game, a ship must be flown through the upper atmosphere of Jupiter. A member of your party is required to be the pilot. **Strategic Simulations, Inc.** tells me that an NPC will do the job if none of your own people can but, after numerous retries, I came to the conclusion that this just was not the case. Each time, I was forced to choose a member of my own team to pilot the craft, without exception. So, be certain you have at least one person with Pilot Fixed Wing.

Other important skills include Climbing, Hiding in Shadows, Fast Talk and Acrobatics. Life Suspension Tech is needed in one instance. Demolitions will come in handy in a couple of places. Pick Lock and Bypass Security are very helpful. Library Research and Programming, ditto. Ship Repair skills will be useful on the living ship. Those are the main ones you should concentrate on building up over the course of the game.

The action begins on Mercury, where the team is assigned to keep an eye on the coronation of the new Sun King and prevent any assassination attempts. It is here (before the big event) that they will first learn about the Matrix device from Dr. Romney before he is hauled away by PURGE. PURGE — Prevention of Unwanted Research and Genetic Engineering — is a new villain. As you might guess from the name, they are against any genetic research of any kind, and having the Matrix device would go a long way to help them "clean up the solar system for humans." So PURGE agents, along with the usual RAM crews and occasional Mercurian troops, will be popping up now and again throughout the game to make your life difficult.

As before, your team will be doing a lot of travelling, visiting, among other places, Earth, Luna, Mars, Mercury, Venus and the asteroid belt, finishing up at Jupiter for the grand finale. Having someone who can pilot a space ship is therefore a necessity.

Not so necessary is space combat. This has not changed at all since the last game and is still governed by the same static, boring routines as ever. Fortunately, you can avoid all off-world encounters and never miss them. The only reason to

engage in this fighting is to fill up your NEO bank account, which is used to purchase fuel, ammo and repairs at various bases. However, all these services are available for free at the NEO base, and with careful piloting, you won't need to buy anything anywhere else.

Speaking of fighting, *Matrix Cubed* is much more combat-intensive than the previous game. It seemed to me that there were more random encounters, for one thing, and more fixed encounters for another. Perhaps we just walked into too many wrong rooms or took too many wrong turns, but my team certainly used up a lot of ammunition in this one.

When we had ammunition, that is. There are three (count 'em, three) points in the game when your party will have to fight essentially naked, without weapons or armor of any kind. The first of these situations occurs on Venus. This one isn't too bad; all you have there are a couple of encounters with Ursadders, and it's over pretty quickly.

Mars, however, is another kettle of aliens entirely. Here you will be running around without your goodies for some time, after being captured by RAM. Buck has also been captured, but he, at least, retains his trusty .45. A good thing, too, since without him you probably wouldn't be able to make it through this portion of the game.

Aside from having to take on (among other things) a combat robot barehanded, there is a major encounter with a small army of (unarmed) guards and Gennie dogs. While the guards have no weapons, the Gennies make up for that with multiple attacks and the ability to poison. Add in the lack of armor on your side (meaning the enemy almost always hits), and you have a very nasty fight indeed.

My team got through it by knocking the difficulty level to the bottom and hoping for the best. Three of the party were Desert Runner fighters, with maximum strength. They, at least, could do some damage when they hit. The other three were capable of nothing better than 1d2+1 barehanded, and were best kept well away from the fight (especially since their own hit points weren't so great). Buck can't be controlled by you, so you just have to cross your fingers that he'll go for the right targets before it's too late.

Once past this combat, you have a choice of exploring to the south or west. I recommend going south, as one of the rooms along that way holds your weapons and armor. You will, of course, have to fight to get to them, but that encounter isn't quite so bad as the one with the dogs. After your team is re-equipped, your human opponents will be similarly armed, but by then, it really doesn't matter too much, as you'll have what you need to handle them.

The final barehanded run occurs in the Amalthean Genetics Foundation. It's not as bad as Mars, but it's definitely worse than Venus. For all of these situations, I recommend keeping the difficulty level to the minimum, and saving the game frequently so you don't lose your progress in case something unpleasant happens.

As if all that wasn't enough, there is the fighting that occurs on the Stormrider platform orbiting Jupiter, which constitutes the end game. Here, you are subjected to multiple waves of attackers, who arrive via the living ship (and how they obtained control is never explained).

The pattern is always the same: you're called to a landing area to repel attack-

ers. When combat ends, you go through the Stormrider ship to "mop up" the troops who slipped in while the main force was being battered. Then, before you know it, yet another attack comes at you.

This goes on for a while, until finally the big moment arrives when you have to pilot the ship through the atmosphere. That's very quick: either your chosen character makes the roll, in which case all is well; or the roll is flubbed, in which case everyone dies, and you'll have to restore to your last save position.

Naturally, there is a final battle after the flight, or actually two, back to back, where your team takes on Sid Refuge (the main PURGE opponent) and his robot friends. The nastier robots are in the second battle, so be sure to save some of the heavy firepower for that one. Remember, you won't have the chance to save the game, or re-equip rocket launchers and the like, between combat sequences.

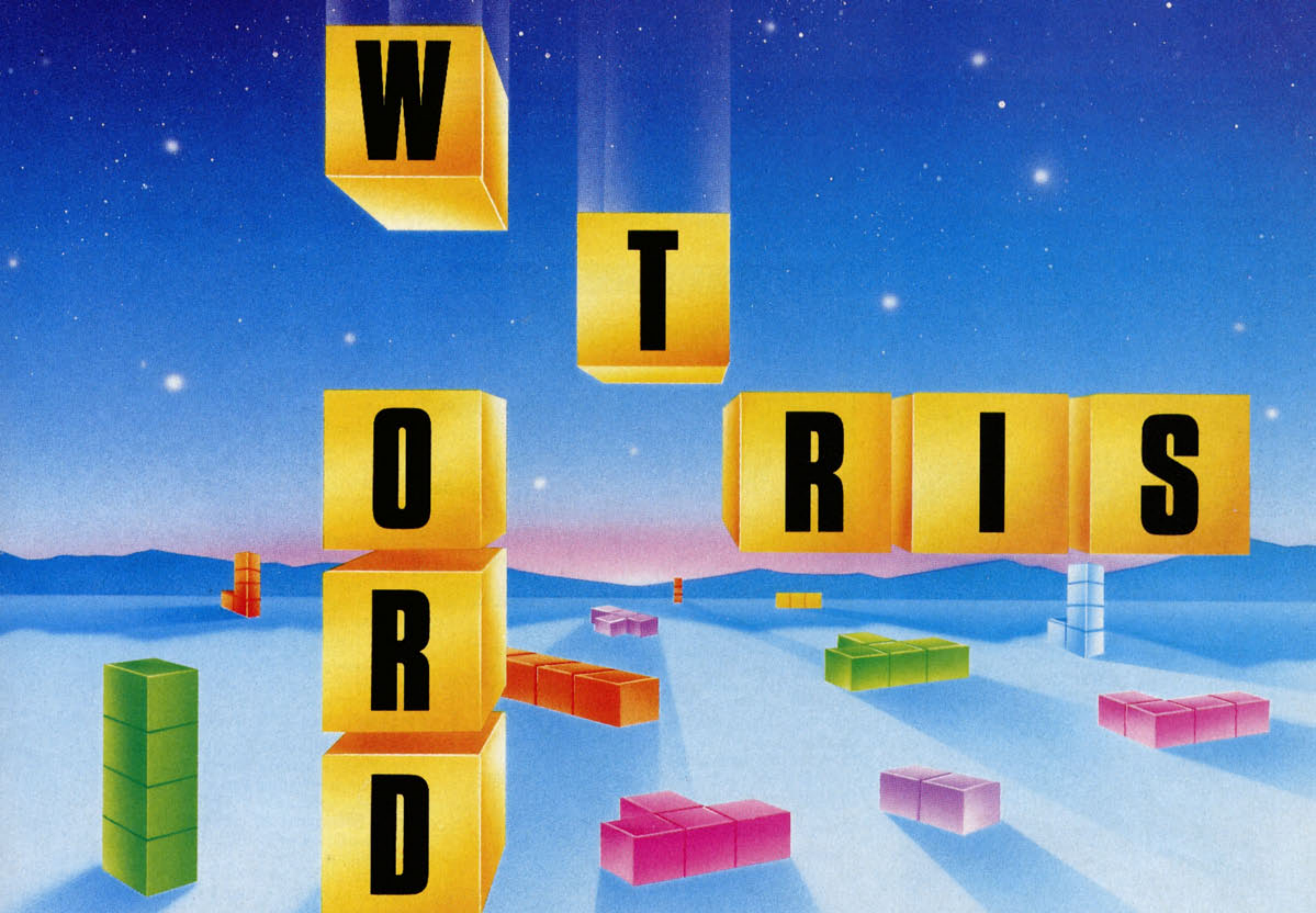
So, after many trials and tribulations, you come to the end. Buck, Wilma and a NEO force arrive in the living ship (and how *they* got control of it isn't explained, either). Buck leads everyone in giving you three cheers (big wow), says, "Let's go home" ...and there you are, looking at the DOS prompt.

That's right, folks. After taking a *lot* of heat for doing that in *Eye of the Beholder*, **SSI** went ahead and did it again in *Matrix Cubed*. Why is it so hard for game designers to understand that players want more for their efforts than a few lines of text and a drop out of the program? That was a slap in the face in *EOTB*, and no less of one here. If space was a consideration, they could have left out the entire side trip of destroying a doomsday laser to make room for a decent ending. In *Countdown to Doomsday*, destroying the doomsday laser was the entire thrust of the game. Here, it's no more than a trivial activity. You go in to a small RAM installation, find the laser, blow it up and that's that. It's mainly a waste of time, since it has little or nothing to do with the plot of *Matrix*.

There are, in fact, several instances of these "doesn't mean a thing" situations. The Sun King, for example. It has no effect on the game whether or not you save his life. If you do, you get some extra experience points; if you don't, you get nothing extra. Otherwise, there isn't much to it. The same is true for the living ship (that vessel which changes hands with alarming frequency). You can bring about an alliance between the Stormriders (whose ship it is) and the pirates (who took it over, more or less), but aside from providing experience, it doesn't really affect anything in the game play.

Overall, *Matrix Cubed* is a disappointment. Aside from the horrible ending, the pieces just don't fit together as well as they should. The individual scenarios that make up the whole are uneven: some are good, some are bad and the rest seem to be there almost as afterthoughts. This one simply doesn't have the smooth flow, the energetic "pulp serial" feel to it, that characterized the first game and made it such fun to play. If a third in the series is planned, we'll hope they go back to the design of *Countdown to Doomsday* and manage to avoid the problems of *Matrix Cubed*. **CGW**

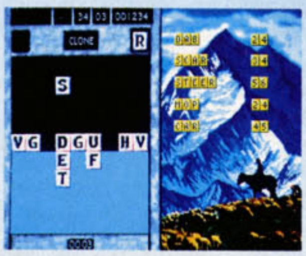
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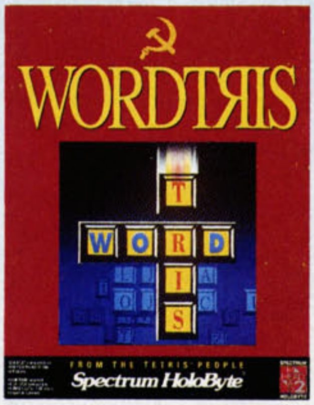
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COMPUTER WARGAMING WORLD

May 1992 | "I Came, I Played, I Conquered" | CGW #94



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Computer Wargaming World is published twelve times a year as a free supplement in ***Computer Gaming World***.

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Broadsides & Gripeshot

A.I. MIA?

by Alan Emrich



Last issue, I put forth an appeal for greater gaming connectivity, specifically requesting that readers make a call to someone who had placed an Opponents Wanted ad or, better still, placing such an ad. Because of the lag time inherent in magazine publishing, letters are only now trickling in regarding that plea, so we'll all discover together in next issue's Opponents Wanted section how well the rally went.

Old Business: Games Sans Brains

Unique to this editorial is a screen shot. It is of the computerized version of the boardgame *EastFront* by **Columbia Games** on the Amiga (it is presently being converted to IBM for *Windows* and should be available in the early fourth quarter). A complete game, with modem and play-by-email features, all it lacks by current computer wargaming standards is an artificial opponent (though it will also lack the hefty price tag of most computer wargames). We asked for your thoughts about relying solely on *human* intelligence for computer wargames. Here were some of the many, many thoughtful comments we received:

"I am learning that BBSs are the most likely place to meet other wargamers. What the world needs is true human-versus-human games that let you exchange save game files in an ongoing game. This could be [by] BBS or disk by mail, but it makes a real difference to have a real person instead of AI." — Mike Raymond (on CompuServe)

"The inability to find opponents drove me away from board games. The best alternative is to have games which offer multi-player play as an option through modems, but which include AI." — Leonardo Zevallos, Huntington Beach, CA

"I am surprised that very few board games have had a direct translation to the computer.... I think one reason really is because of the daunting AI routines that must be incorporated for solitaire play. Truly, AI is the most complex programming of a computer game. It is a module by itself that must be created, for the most part, after the game has been completed. If a publisher were comfortable with creating a game without AI, the development time would be significantly reduced.

"In our dreams, we envision a large table with a flat screen, sort of like the old football arcade game. Surrounding the table are player stations that have mice and keyboard input devices. Displayed on the table-screen is a full-size VGA map, with each player's units displayed as if they were counters on a board. Each player would take his turn like a regular wargame, using the mouse to select and move his units." — Mark Accetta, Jersey City, NJ

"I would definitely be interested in purchasing wargames based on or duplicated from many board game titles without the AI." — John M. Slogick

"If I always had an opponent, I would probably play boardgames. Computer wargames without AI is unthinkable." — C. B. Blackard, Little Rock, AR

"Unless a game has a modem option, regardless of its complexity, that sim/game soon disappears from my hard drive. Who wants to continually pound the hapless AI once a $60 game has been mastered? Modem games offer a freshness that comes with playing human opponents. [They have a] much longer lifespan and, at $20 a pop, I'd buy them all! I refuse to purchase games now unless they have the modem option." — Dave Bednarek, Milwaukee, WI

"Then there are those people in my situation — grognards in small towns that don't *have* human opponents and cannot afford excessive telephone bills. Sure, AI in some games is 'anything but intelligent,' but they are all I have. Games without AI? No. Games that give you a choice of human opponents or AI? I'm all for it." — Ray Stickler, Paris, IL

"Modem ability is a must, whether BBS or real-time format." — Bill Whiteford, Denver, CO

Vox Populi, Vox Dei

Not surprisingly, wargamers universally want *better* AI in their computer wargames. While solitaire-only wargamers are still a large percentage of the group, those seeking to reach out and find human adversaries to challenge appear to be the largest (and growing) segment of the wargaming population. Like the first respondent, I've found many new wargaming friends through the networks and BBSs. It seems like wargamers have the kind of disposable income to buy computers and modems and subscribe to a network. Gregarious by nature, we've carved out wargaming niches on every major network in the US.

In the meantime, the number of "computerized" board wargamers will only increase, as will those with modems, seeking other electronically connected wargamers to match wits with. One day, connectivity will be a standard alongside solitaire play versus AI. In the meantime, computer wargamers will continue to reach out and crush someone. CGW

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Circle Reader Service #35

An Answer For Bored Boardgamers

Three-Sixty's V for Victory: Utah Beach

by John J. Vanore

TITLE:	V for Victory: Battleset 1: Utah Beach
SYSTEM:	Macintosh
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Ed Rains
PUBLISHER:	Three-Sixty Pacific Campbell, CA





Computer wargaming can generally be viewed as an outgrowth of manual, or board wargaming, which relies on unit counters and a hexagon-grid mapboard. Over the years, software designers have tried a variety of approaches to recreate the "feel" of boardgames, while incorporating all the advantages inherent to a computer-based game. After a decade of efforts that have met with varying degrees of success, **Three-Sixty Pacific** appears to have come closest to a perfect synthesis of the board and computer formats. They achieved this feat with *V for Victory: Battleset 1: Utah Beach* (hereinafter *Utah Beach*). Perhaps most amazingly, they did it first for the Macintosh platform, making full use of the Mac's graphic user interface (pull-down menus, etc.). Conversions to other platforms are in the works; an IBM-compatible version is next and Three-Sixty may follow up with other formats as well. This reviewer, a Macaholic, can only hope this initial release for the Macintosh is a harbinger of the future.

Utah Beach (as described in the "Sneak Preview" in *CGW* #88) starts up after the D-Day landings and deals with battles and engagements involving U.S. and German forces in the western portion of the invasion site. A total of six scenarios are presented; one short introductory scenario to help players familiarize themselves with system mechanics, four longer (and increasingly complex) battle scenarios and the full campaign which ties it all together.

"D-Day" is a generic military term that designates the date of an amphibious assault, with the first wave scheduled to hit the beach at H-Hour. For military historians and veteran gamers, however, there is only one D-Day — June 6th, 1944, which marked the Allied invasion of Normandy along five beaches (supplemented by airborne drops behind those beaches). Three beaches, Gold, Juno and Sword, saw landings by Commonwealth forces. Omaha and Utah Beaches were the sites of American assaults and Utah Beach, the westernmost of the five, is the locale of this game. Interestingly enough, however, none of the scenarios included deals with the invasion itself. The earliest start date for a scenario (the full campaign scenario, at that) is June 7, the day after the landings.

Utah Beach is remarkably similar to a classic board wargame. Movement is hexagon-based and units are rated for factors such as attack, defense, movement and range (for artillery), as well as the less tangible attributes of fatigue, morale and disruption.

Turns are divided into three phases per player turn, replicating the sequential flow common to most wargames (and in stark contrast to titles such as *Patton Strikes Back*, which uses a continuous game clock).

Each turn begins with the Planning Phase, at which time the player maps out his forces' actions for the current turn. Functions covered here include movement and attacks by ground units, artillery support, air strikes and naval bombardment. This is also the time to adjust supply level allocations, if needed.

Movement, courtesy of the Mac user interface, is a simple matter of "click-and-drag." Artillery fire support allocation is handled similarly, with the addition of holding down the Command key to distinguish shooting from moving. Likewise, with the air or naval sidebar opened up, simply clicking on the desired target hex is all that is necessary. If this becomes too big a burden, as may happen in the larger and more complex scenarios, the computer "staff" is available to carry out these fire support allocation functions, all from a pull-down menu. Attacks are planned just like movement, except that the "movement" is made into an adjacent, enemy-occcupied hex. From a Command Bar at the bottom of the screen, the player has the option of selecting a regular "Assault" (the default option), a light "Probe" or an "All-out Assault." (See the Strategy sidebar for an explanation of this option.)

When "The Plan" is considered satisfactory, shifting to the Execution Phase will implement the plans of the previous phase, and give the player a chance to watch his strategy unfold. Ground forces, subject to their movement allowances, will follow the paths traced out during Planning. Attacks also occur here — these are carried out only by units which began the Execution Phase adjacent to their intended target.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of *Utah Beach* is the quality of the computer Artificial Intelligence (AI) routines used to control the computer opponents. As either the American or German, the computer presents a tough, competent foe. The AI routines appear to be heavily based on sound military doctrine, intertwined with a thorough knowledge of victory point objectives. The computer is tenacious on defense, and very smart on offense. It shows a clear preference for conducting a limited number of massive, coordinated attacks each turn, with full consideration given to exploitation of terrain advantages.

A final note is necessary. As can be expected with the Mac, sound and graphics are superb. Sound effects, which can be toggled on or off, are impressive and add to the atmosphere created by the game system as a whole. The price to be paid for this sophistication is that *Utah Beach* eats up nearly 2 MB on the hard drive.

Every gamer knows that there are "nice-to-have" games, which are curiosities at best, and "must-haves." *Utah Beach* is clearly in the latter category, a wargame designed by wargamers for wargamers. While taking full advantage of the computer format, it preserves the tactile feel of classic board wargaming in a thoroughly historical venue, leaving this reviewer completely satisfied with a game well fought every time around. **CGW**

Hitting The Beach (Strategy Notes)

At the risk of sounding overly simplistic, this reviewer can only state the obvious. The optimal way to play *Utah Beach* effectively (i.e. to win) is to fight the battles and engagements according to sound, tried-and-true battle doctrine. What follows, then, are some general common-sense concepts to keep in mind during play. These comments are generally applicable to both U.S. and German commanders.

Rather than view the battlefield from an extreme micro- (tactical) or macro- (strategic) perspective, a player must have a firm handle on his own force's strengths, weaknesses and capabilities. He must also know what other assets are available to support his efforts. Using only the on-map forces, without taking advantage of air strikes and naval bombardment support, can be catastrophic.

Force status is *critical*! This cannot be repeated too often. Fatigued units and units low on supply will not fight well. That is a given. In fact, game documentation specifies a 3.3 percent decrease in combat strengths for each step of fatigue. (This from a rulebook that omits most major algorithms used in combat resolution.) Fatigue and disruption effects are serious, so take heed! Take advantage of night turns to rest the forward-most units. Rotate front-line units into the rear, while throwing newly-arrived forces into the fray. Actions taken along the way to attenuate fatigue levels, particularly removing units from enemy zones of control and completely resting them during night turns, will pay dividends throughout the game in terms of higher unit effectiveness, fewer casualties suffered, and a more impressive victory level. The key here is to walk a fine line. The player must avoid driving his forces to a highly fatigued state, yet must drive hard and fast enough to achieve his objectives in a timely manner. Easier said than done!

Utah Beach, while clearly showing its boardgame roots, takes advantage of the computer format and goes beyond the conventions familiar to old grognards. Take, for instance, the victory conditions and the absence of a "sudden death" victory. The program calculates victory point totals at the end of each turn and, in addition to the usual "body count" method, victory points are awarded for possession of certain terrain features, notably cities and towns. Points are awarded in *Utah Beach* on a cumulative, turn-by-turn basis, precluding a player from making a last-minute dash to snatch up victory point objectives and winning on a technicality. This reviewer has, on numerous occasions, eliminated all German units from the map, but nonetheless lost the game. This resulted from taking too much time in reaching assigned objectives, thus allowing the computer opponent to reap the victory points for territorial control turn after turn. Frustrating...

Although the underlying premise of victory point calculation may be valid, its representation is, in this reviewer's perspective, the one weak spot in *Utah Beach*. The dynamics of the victory conditions may inspire (and for this reviewer have inspired!) some less than orthodox tactics which, while useful in winning the game, may achieve their ends in ahistorical and unsound ways. For example, after identifying and locating all cities which yield victory points, a crafty U.S. player may detach a small group of battalion-sized units on a "city-snatching exercise," meant only to garner victory points. While this writer does not endorse such an approach, it does cut down on the nasty incidences of seeing a swastika-emblazoned flag waving at the end of a scenario to indicate a German victory.

The key to success can be summed up in two words: "combined arms." In the drive to achieve victory over the computer opponent without resorting to questionable "tactics," the player must optimize each attack and shatter the defenders. A balanced attacking force is the key. A mix of infantry and armor is the foundation of a good ➤

attack. Artillery support will help, either as bombardment, in direct support of an attack or, in the interdiction mode, cutting off retreat paths or the movement of reinforcements along major arteries. If assaulting a town or fortified area, one should not forget that each division has an organic combat engineer battalion. While ostensibly weak on offense, their special abilities in breaching obstacles provide an odds-shift modifier that can make a crucial difference in an important assault.

When designating attacks or committing units to defense, one must also remember to click on a unit's icon at the bottom of the screen to call up the command bar and give the player the option of specifying different levels of intensity for the operation. When playing in a limited intelligence environment, for instance, the player may want to execute a number of light "Probe" attacks (intelligence-gathering missions which minimize contact and the potential for friendly casualties). When the intention is to seize territory or destroy enemy forces, an "Assault" or "All-out Assault" is in order. An All-out Assault is based on increased determination of units involved in the combat, rather than an increase in firepower or other tangible factors. The benefits from a successful All-out Assault can be enormous, but this maneuver is a two-edged sword. A failure will result in a greatly-increased number of casualties to the attacking forces.

A few words are in order regarding stacking. The basic limit is three battalions per hex. However, due to unit frontages on the offensive, only two battalions can effectively assault from a hex. Spread out attacks from a number of hexes, serving to both cut off potential retreat routes and overwhelm defenses by attacking from front, flank and (possibly) the rear of a defensive position.

Turning to defense, common sense is reflected in the game mechanics. There are three basic elements to be considered on defense: terrain, prepared defensive positions and unit mode. Handling terrain is obvious: hunker the units down in the most forbidding landscape around. The Cotentin Peninsula is home to the bocage, the notorious hedgerows comprised of sunken fields surrounded by three-to-six foot high earthen walls. This is probably the best terrain to defend from, and there is certainly no shortage of it in Utah Beach. Bocage, or indeed any other terrain feature, can be enhanced by prepared positions.

Fortifications, whose development requires the presence of engineer battalions, represent an extensive defensive network that includes trenches, minefields and the like. Merely "digging in," on the other hand, provides forces with the benefits of foxholes, prepared weapons positions and pre-planned fields of fire.

The essence of defense is having a plan in mind, one which will, if not defeat the attacker entirely, then deny him his objectives long enough to also deny victory. That defensive scheme must include assigning defensive modes to the troops in the trenches. The player needs to determine how intensely to defend a particular position and communicate that to the units in question. "Retreat if attacked" is a viable option where slowing down the attacker is a desired objective (and minimizes casualties for the defender). "Defend if attacked" is the default mode, similar to the "Assault" option on offense. Maximum level of effort is defined by the "Hold at all Costs" option. Much like the All-out Assault, this is a bloody choice which mandates a higher level of casualties than allowing retreat. Of course, under a particularly devastating assault, the defenders may not hold even here, further magnifying the losses on defense.

The foregoing analysis merely scratches the surface of a complex game, and is based on a scant few weeks of high-intensity testing. However, the game mechanics are generally based on sound military doctrine, and smart play will, as a rule, lead to success.

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Circle Reader Service #49

The Club Med Invasion

The Mediterranean Conflict: Harpoon Battleset #3

by Tim Carter





Tim Carter serves on the faculty of the Institute of International Relations at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

TITLE:	Harpoon Battleset #3: The Mediterranean Conflict
SYSTEM:	Amiga, IBM
PRICE:	$29.95
PUBLISHER:	Three-Sixty Pacific Campbell, CA

One of the great strengths of the *Harpoon* system is its inherent ability to expand, constantly providing the grognard with new situations and new problems to solve. *Harpoon Battleset #3: The Mediterranean Conflict* (*MedCon*), not only provides players with new platforms and a new map, it also presents a number of markedly different types of conflicts. The game, as a whole, provides a different experience from either the GIUK or North Atlantic Battlesets.

The third *Harpoon* battleset includes not only U.S., Soviet and Western European forces, but also the navies and air forces of Israel, Egypt, Syria and Libya. In fact, more than half of the scenarios included in the battleset involve situations which do not take place in the context of a superpower conflict. This is a welcome development, given that such "minor" conflicts seem much more likely to occur in real life.

New Faces, New Forces

While **Three-Sixty Pacific** has provided players with a number of hypothetical Third World War scenarios, the real heart of *MedCon* lies within those scenarios that deal with conflicts among the smaller powers within the region. Several Arab-Israeli scenarios are included, as well a war between Greece and Turkey and one between Egypt and Libya. Regardless of the countries involved, the battles in *MedCon* have a different feel from those that take place in either the GIUK gap or the North Atlantic. In part this is due to the confined spaces of the Mediterranean itself. As well, the mix of platforms available in most instances provides players with new situations and new problems.

Two important elements in the third battleset are fast attack craft (missile boats) and attack helicopters. While missile boats saw some action in the smaller scenarios of the GIUK battleset, the treatment of these platforms is much more complete in *MedCon*. Fast attack craft comprise almost the entire surface navy of many smaller states. Further, every scenario included has these craft on at least one side, and victory often depends upon the coordination of missile boats with other air and sea elements (see strategy and tactics below).

Although helicopters capable of surface strike missions are not new to the *Harpoon* system, they take on a more significant role in the more confined spaces of the Mediterranean than they do in the wide-open spaces of the Atlantic. When these units can be spared from ASW and search missions, they provide even the smallest task force with a long-range missile capability. Against smaller vessels, helicopters can be deadly, so long as they remain out of anti-aircraft range.

Finally, even those scenarios that rely on the now out-of-date notion of a war between the Soviet Union and NATO are given a distinctive flavor, due to the extensive use of small craft and the navies of smaller NATO allies such as France, Italy, Greece and Turkey.

Combined Ops in Confined Spaces (Strategy)

Since so many of the platforms available are *not* top-of-the-line equipment, players will have to be much more cautious in their use of some equipment. Providing a surface group with anti-air and ASW coverage now requires considerably more coordination, as air units will primarily be based on land, rather than at sea. On the plus side, the area being dealt with is generally a lot smaller, making the coordination of forces much easier.

As usual, combined operations are the name of the game. However, given that the task forces available are unlikely to be as well-rounded in terms of capabilities as was the case in the Atlantic, combining forces takes more care and more planning. (This will be more familiar to those players who have spent a substantial amount of time playing the Soviets.)

A typical operation might involve a central task force with limited air capabilities complemented by land-based air and missile boats. While air units should provide ASW and CAP for the main task force, missile boats can operate at a distance from the main task force to provide a screen against surface attack. If possible, diesel submarines should operate in conjunction with both the central task force and the screening groups, as their speed makes interception under other circumstances a matter of pure luck. A particularly useful ploy is to entice enemy forces to chase a missile boat squadron onto a waiting submarine.

Just the FACs (Tactics)

Missile boats are the weapon of choice for many smaller states, as they are cheap and pack an effective anti-ship punch. However, the almost total lack of defense means that fundamentally different tactics are needed if fast attack craft are to avoid getting into mutually suicidal exchanges with similar classes of enemy boats.

Missile boats are most effective when they have aircraft to spot for them, as this may allow them to attack undetected and escape without suffering a retaliatory attack. The helicopters on board the Israeli Saar 4.5s are worth their weight in gold for precisely this reason. These helicopters should be protected at all costs and should only make attacks themselves if there is no risk.

Often missile craft will either not have the luxury of air support, or both sides will be able to perform searches, nullifying any advantage. When this is the case, all that a player can do is try to keep his ships alive until they can launch their missiles, then flee at top speed.

One tactic which seems to improve group survivability is to deploy one's missile boats in a line-ahead formation, heading directly toward the most likely threat. While the front ship will almost always be sunk by an enemy attack, many incoming missiles will continue to strike the wreck long after the ship has been destroyed. This seems to be particularly useful in the case of bearing-only attacks.

This sacrificial ship can provide time for the rest of the group to launch their missiles or, if they are out of range, to flee until the enemy has lost contact and then attempt another attack (possibly from another direction). Continuing an attack in the face of superior enemy firepower is a recipe for disaster, as most units will not survive long enough to close the necessary distance to attack.

An alternate ploy is to detach a single ship, which can sail slightly ahead of the main force, occasionally turning on its radar in search of the enemy. Again, this ship is unlikely to live very long. However, it may well allow the rest of a group to launch its own attack undetected, the key to success with missile craft.

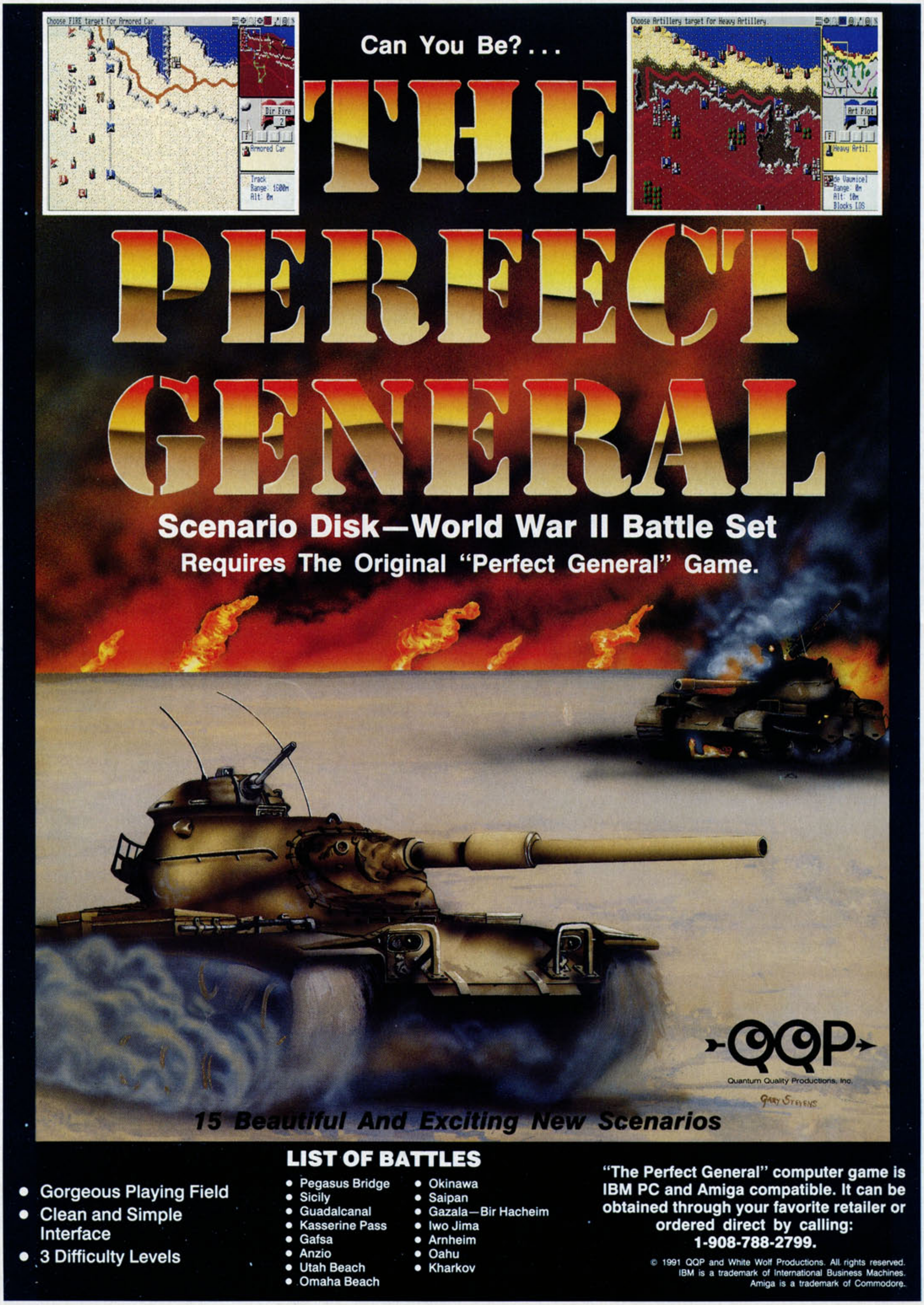
Matching Technology in the Air (Doctrine)

Third World countries are usually able to deploy some modern platforms. However, they often have to make do with older units in some key areas, in spite of the fact that these units are lacking. This is particularly the case with respect to air forces. Many strike aircraft, particularly among the Arab nations, are not equipped with modern sensors, making them less suited for night or bad weather operations. However, players should take the advice given on the *Harpoon* database with a grain of salt when it comes to the use of older or obsolete platforms. Even though many older fighters do not have the ability to detect enemy aircraft themselves, they can still be effective at night, *if* they are guided to their targets by other radars.

The key weakness of older aircraft such as the MiG-21 and the A-4 Skyhawk is their lack of long-range missiles. Due to this weakness, these aircraft should not be used against advanced interceptors, such as the F-15. Still, this reviewer found them to be effective both at night and during the day against opponents which were not equipped with medium- or long-range air-to-air missiles. Older aircraft should not be used against surface targets except under good conditions, as the lack of advanced ordnance and targeting systems usually leads to high losses and little target damage.

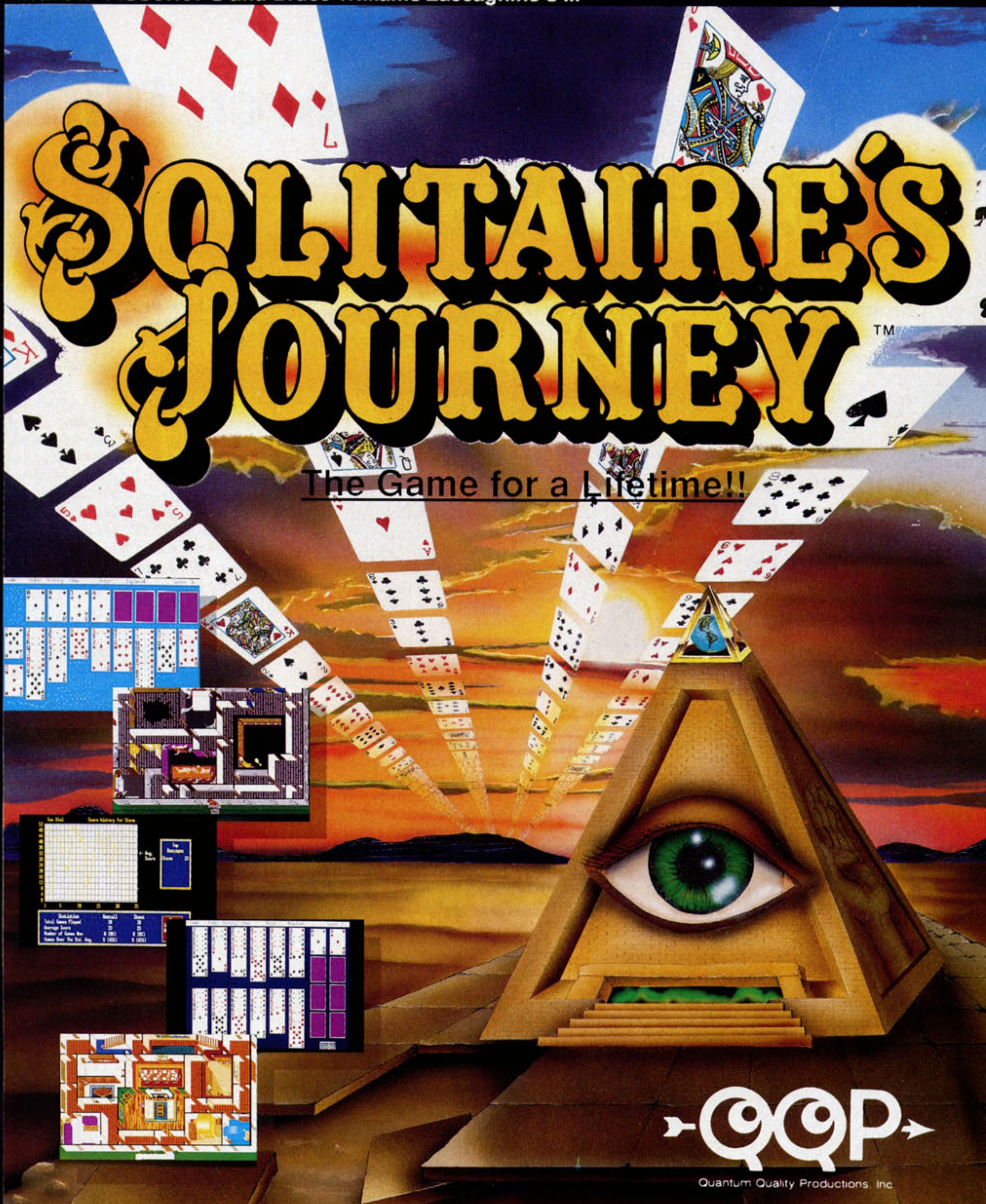
Players should be willing to use aircraft and loadouts in roles that they were not originally intended to fill. In the GIUK battleset, this reviewer sank whole Soviet fleets using waves of ASW aircraft armed with Harpoon missiles. In *MedCon*, players will be faced with a serious lack of modern hardware, especially long-range stand-off missiles. Most anti-radar missiles make a fairly effective substitute for anti-ship stand-off missiles, particularly when used in large numbers.

Harpoon: Battleset Three: The Mediterranean Conflict is an entertaining and thought-provoking addition to the *Harpoon* system. The combination of imaginative scenarios with new (and/or outdated) platforms and situations give the battleset a distinctive style of play that sets it apart from the Atlantic battlesets. **CGW**



Circle Reader Service #65

Andrew Visscher's and Bruce Williams Zaccagnino's ...



Singin' the 8th Air Force Blues

Strategy and Tactics for Lucasfilm's Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe

by Jim Lowerre

Table A: Example Target Attack Results (Mission 2, 26 August 1943)

Groups		Target		Bombs	Buildings
Bomber	*Escort*	*Name*	*Type*		
2	1	Nordholtz	Airfield	7	7
3	1	Bremen	Airfield	10	10
2	1	Deelen	Airfield	7	7
2	1	Zeist	Airfield	9	9
2	1	Venlo	Airfield	7	7
3	**4**	**Haren**	**Airfield**	**0**	**9**
	1	**Mooseele**	**Airfield**		**4**

Aircraft Shot Down: total, 6; by player, 2.
Buildings Destroyed: 13, all by player.
Points: 540. **Boldface** entries in above table refer to primary mission.
Force Losses: US, 3 bombers; Germany, 6 fighters.

Group Type	Groups Before/ After Mission	Pilots Remaining
German	13/7	64%
US Bombers	11/5	96%
US Fighters	5/5	98%

Combat flying in WWII remains a fascination of many a mature PC pilot. By that time, aircraft had a trusty mechanical reliability. No more were skilled and daring souls lost to pure coincidence or malicious fate. Generally, they killed themselves.

In aerial combat of the era, pilot skill, rather than weather, winds or faulty wires, determined who would be toasted and who would be toast. Fighters fought while bombers bombed and everyone had a grand old time on the ground. **Lucasfilm**'s *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* lets period aficionados sail through the skies of the Third Reich in both directions. Not only can they test their flying/fighting skills, but they can also test their analytical abilities. Players may direct either side in the first true operational air campaign conducted by man against man.

The U.S. 8th Air Force initiated and pursued this campaign with a little help from their friends (the British), but not much. It is from the perspective of the Mighty 8th that the following discussion of tactics and operations comes. May the reader enjoy, and soar.

The Way It Should Be (Allied Strategy)

Step One: Destroy the enemy air force. The first target in any air campaign is the enemy air force. Attack the most capable Gruppen first: Me-229, Me-262, Me-163, FW-190, Me 109, in that order. Concentrate on nothing but occupied Luftwaffe airfields until only two or three Gruppen remain (unlike the Iraqis, the Luftwaffe has no place to run). Every turn thereafter, attack all occupied airfields with at least one Bomber Group.

Step Two: Destroy the enemy economy. With the Luftwaffe down and out (pun intended), attacking the German economy becomes both feasible and profitable. First off, destroy the enemy's research and development centers. This will prevent a disadvantageous technology mismatch later. Don't panic, there's plenty of time.

Now, go after the industries affected by the victory conditions. Attack the highest pay-off/largest percentage of industry targets first. Don't trust the available campaign intelligence. The summary and map aren't reliable. Both have out-dated or incomplete information. The only good source of information is *Ultra* and, as in history, it should be used sparingly to prevent discovery.

Note that keeping track of one's own results is a must (see Chart A, Example Target Attack Results). Don't attack old targets unless the initial attack yielded poor results or several turns have passed. Expect targets to regenerate themselves (one building every turn or two) and recognize that flak fully regenerates each turn. Don't forget to check and attack all occupied Luftwaffe airfields *each turn*. Otherwise, the Luftwaffe will regenerate and the player will suddenly be intercepted again. Once the enemy is down, keep him down.

The Personal Touch (The Mission)

Step One: Destroy the enemy air force. Fly the P-47 in the close escort role (maximum firepower, ammunition and accuracy). Attack the closest occupied airfield (fuel/time-over-target considerations). Put three bombers in one flight group and four escorts in two more (if more than four escorts are used, there will be an endless stream of interceptors, which makes it very difficult to attack the target). Use high-point NPC pilots (they reduce losses and improve target effects). Start the bombers at 20,000 feet and the escorts at 22,000. Go out to take on the first group of interceptors, then

Table B: Target Description (Part 1)

Target Type	Number and Size of Buildings					Bombing Orientation
	Total	*Large*	*Medium*	*Small*	*Other*	
Ball-Bearing Factory	4	2	2			N-S (2 Lg., 1 Med.)
Research Site	5	3	1	1		E-W (3 Lg.)
Aircraft Factory	8	2	1	5		E-W (3 Sm., 2 Lg.)
Oil Refinery	10	1	1		8 Tanks	E-W (3 Tanks, 1 Lg.)
Aircraft Engine Factory	6	3	3			N-S (3 Med.)
Munitions Factory	5	2	1	2		NW-SE (2 Lg.)
Rail Center	9	4	4	1		NW-SE (2 Lg., 1 Med.)
Airfield (Dogleg Runway)	7			1	2 Hangars 4 Towers	E-W (2 Hangars)
Airfield (L Runway)	9			3	2 Hangars 4 Towers	E-W (2 Hangars) N-S (3 Med.)
V-1 Site	7		3	3	1 Ramp	NW-SE (1 Med., 2 Sm.)
V-2 Site	7	1	2	3	1 Pad	NW-SE (1 Med., 2 Sm.)

Notes: Bombing Orientation lines up the largest number of buildings for a single aircraft's attack. Also, some targets have underground buildings not mentioned in the documentation, which means that bombing missions can actually destroy more buildings than are visible.



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Table B (Part 2)

Target Type	Target Name	Percent of Industry	Within 1943 P-47 Range?
Ball-Bearing Factories	Schweinfurt	81	no
	Berlin	9	
	Stuttgart	4	
	Steyr	4	
Research Sites	Peenemunde	45	
	Lechfeld	27	
	Augsburg	18	
	Gottingen	9	yes
Aircraft Factories	Regensburg	15	no
	Augsburg	15	
	Bremen	12	yes
	Leipzig	10	no
	Johannisthal	7	
	Brandenburg	6	
	Kassel	5	yes
	Oschersleben	5	no
	Warnemunde	5	
	Wismar	5	
	Schwabish-Hall	5	

Table B (Part 3)

Target Type	Target Name	Percent of Industry	Within 1943 P-47 Range?
Oil Refineries	Leuna	13	no
	Duisburg	9	yes
	Bohlen	9	no
	Hamburg	9	
	Lutzkendorf	7	
	Dortmund	6	yes
	Essen	6	
	Wesseling	6	
	Bremen	4	
	Brux	4	no
	Magdeburg	4	
	Poelitz	4	
	Ludwigshafen	3	yes
	Regensburg	3	no
Aircraft Engine Factories	Genshagen	16	
	Spandau	12	
	Marlenfelde	12	
	Dessau	9	
	Magdeburg	9	
	BAsdorf	9	
	Brunswick	7	
	Altenbeuna	6	yes
	Kiel	6	no
	Munich	5	
	Kothen	2	

Table B (Part 4)

Target Type	Target Name	Percent of Industry	Within 1943 P-47 Range?
Munitions Factories	Dortmund	8	yes
	Essen	8	
	Berlin	8	no
	Duisburg	7	yes
	Hamburg	7	
	Dusseldorf	7	
	Frankfurt	7	
	Mannheim	7	
	Munster	7	
	Hannover	6	
	Wilhelmshaven	5	
	Kiel	5	no
	Stuttgart	3	
	Nurnburg	3	
Rail Centers	Schwarte	12	yes
	Frankfurt	8	
	Koblenz	8	
	Cologne	8	
	Mainz	8	
	Hannover	8	
	Mannheim	7	
	Magdeburg	7	no
	Leipzig	7	
	Saarbrucken	5	yes
	Kassel	3	
	Rouen	3	
	Juvisy-Sur-Ogre	3	
	Munich	3	no

stay close to the bombers until they're no longer threatened. Don't dump the drop tank(s) when escorting (he's after the bombers; the player will be just fine as long as he doesn't get in front of him).

After there are no more enemy interceptors, release the wingman back to base and dive down to the target. After the bombers attack, finish off the enemy airfield. Attack the flak towers first, one at a time, from outside the airfield perimeter, out of range of all but the target tower. After destroying all buildings on the primary target, take out as many buildings as possible at other target locations. Repeat until the missions are no longer intercepted (Luftwaffe withdraws out of escort range or is reduced to three or fewer Gruppen). Expect heavy bomber losses in the first two or three missions (like losing all of them before they reach the target).

Step Two: Destroy the enemy economy. When enemy Gruppen are no longer a threat, switch to V-weapon and economic targets (see Chart B, Target Description). Use seven P-47s in the dive bomb and strafe role. Put the maximum number of aircraft (six) in the flight group (pilots not in the player's flight don't do as well as those with him, even when high-point NPC pilots are assigned). Start at 100 feet when attacking flak-defended targets. Once all buildings on the one's target are destroyed, release the wingmen back to base (they don't add anything in subsequent attacks and may run out of fuel) and go on to destroy more buildings. Each turn, attack a fresh target.

V-weapon targets are undefended and thus the most vulnerable. V-2 sites are recognizable from altitude and distance as yellow patches on the countryside, V-1 sites

Table C: P-47 Strafing

Target Type	Easy	Moderate	Tough
Ball-Bearing Plant	1 Black/Gray Small (north side)	1 Black/Gray Small (east side)	2 Black/Gray Large
Research Site	1 White Small	3 Black/Gray Large	
Aircraft Factory		7 Black/Gray 2 Large, 5 Small	1 Black/Gray Medium (east side)
Oil Refinery	8 Black/Gray Tanks	1 Black/Gray Medium	1 Black/Gray Large
Aircraft Engine Factory		6 Black/Gray 3 Large, 3 Medium	
Munitions Factory	1 White Small	3 Black/Gray 2 Large, 1 Small	1 Black/Gray Large (end of trestles)
Rail Center	1 White, Small 3 Black/Gray, Medium	4 Black/Gray Large	
Airfield	4 White, Towers 1 White, Small	2 Brown, Hangars 3 Black/Gray, Small	
V-1 Site	1 Brown Medium	3 Black/Gray Small	2 Red-Roofed/Gray Medium
V-2 Site	1 Black/Gray, Large 1 White, Small	2 Black/Gray Small	2 Brown Medium

Key: Easy, destroyed in one pass; moderate, destroyed in two passes; tough, needs more than two passes to destroy.

as black patches. Drop bombs on the tough buildings, strafe the others (see Chart C, Strafing). Pick a primary target in the vicinity of several others (this ensures running out of ammunition before fuel).

When attacking economic targets, personally attack the flak positions while the flight attacks the target. From altitude and distance flak batteries show as bright green patches in cities and dark green patches in the country. Stay beneath 200 feet and the flak can't shoot. Then, once the flak is destroyed, it is possible to finish off the buildings the flight missed.

When planning a mission against an economic target, use high magnification and range circles to identify threat flak batteries (flak batteries have a range of three miles, so the actual target area extends beyond the map symbol). Begin the mission where the highest threat flak batteries can be attacked first (those with the greatest target area coverage).

Attack guns from the side. Ignore the building (fire control center?) behind the guns. Each gun counts as a separate building for the player's personal score. When the flak stops shooting in the target area, one can turn to finish remaining buildings.

High-point NPC fighter pilots in one's flight group (see Chart D, Pilot Rank Points) will continue to attack the primary target until it is destroyed or they exhaust ammunition or fuel. High-point NPC fighter pilots in other flight groups and average- to low-point NPC fighter pilots in the player's flight group will make a single bombing pass and a single strafing pass, then return to base. Using high-point NPCs allows one to orbit the primary target while one's flight takes it apart, saving one's own ordnance for subsequent targets.

Don't assign rockets to other aircraft (NPC pilots do better with bombs). Use wing bombs and drop tanks for distant targets. Pick the closest target to allow carrying bombs rather than fuel. Pick the target with the fewest flak guns defending it. Each turn, make an attack on a fresh target. Avoid flak and towers on the way home.

Other Touches (Secondary Missions)

Results of secondary attacks depend on the number of buildings destroyed at the primary and subsequent targets. For maximum points, make the primary attack on nearby undefended V-weapon sites. Ensure that all buildings at the primary target are destroyed, then destroy as many other buildings as possible, within fuel/ordnance limits.

Assign secondary attacks to the tough targets. A single bombing group or ground-attack group will completely destroy a secondary target if the primary target is completely destroyed and four or five more buildings are destroyed on subsequent target(s). Allocate two attacking groups on the most important secondary targets to ensure destruction (i.e. Peenemunde research site, Schweinfurt ball-bearing plant). Use the results tracking chart to calculate requirements for follow-up strikes.

"Hey, You in the Back" (Reserves)

Deploy reserve fighter groups to separate forward airfields. Groups on separate airfields give maximum flexibility in creating flight groups. Forward airfields give maximum escort/fighter bomber range.

Leading Little Boys (Pilot Management)

Before starting a campaign, personal expertise and experienced pilots are needed.

Use the MS-DOS MkDir command to create a pilot save subdirectory and call it PILOTSAV. Use the Historical Missions and Tours of Duty to build one high-point NPC fighter pilot and one high-point bomber crew. Fly the easier (lowest numbered) historical missions repeatedly. Save the NPC pilot/crew to the PILOTSAV subdirectory every two or three missions. If a pilot or crew is lost, copy the file out of the subdirectory back into the SWOTL directory.

As an alternative to the Historical Missions and Tours of Duty, build the pilot/crew's score using the custom mission builder. Don't add defending fighters, but concentrate on hitting buildings. Initially pick targets near England. Drop bombs individually. Attempt to destroy one building with each bomb/bomb release. For the fighter pilot, fly the P-47 with bombs. Strafe after bombing until out of ammunition (hmmm, sounds like a prescription). Attack different types of targets to become familiar with the layout of each. Don't forget to get back over England before ending the mission.

Continue to fly individual missions until a full colonel fighter pilot and bomber crew are developed. Then, use the MS-DOS copy command to clone the two colonels into other NPCs. Make as many as desired. Save them all to the PILOTSAV subdirectory. As pilots are lost, resurrect them out of the subdirectory.

End Game (Conclusions)

Hit the Luftwaffe with everything on the first turn. One group, bomber or attack can and should be assigned to each and every occupied Luftwaffe airfield. Then all one has to do is fly fast and shoot straight. If the first mission is successful, the rest of the campaign will be a breeze — one might even win in five or six turns. This writer has dropped the Luftwaffe from 18 Gruppen to one on the opening turn of a strategic bombing campaign. **CGW**

Table D: US Pilot Rank Points

2nd Lt.	1st Lt.	Captain	Major	Lt. Col.	Colonel	Br. Gen.
Low-Point NPCs		Average-Point NPCs		High-Point NPCs		
0-500	500-1500	1500-2500	2500-3000	3000-6000	6000-12,000	12,000+

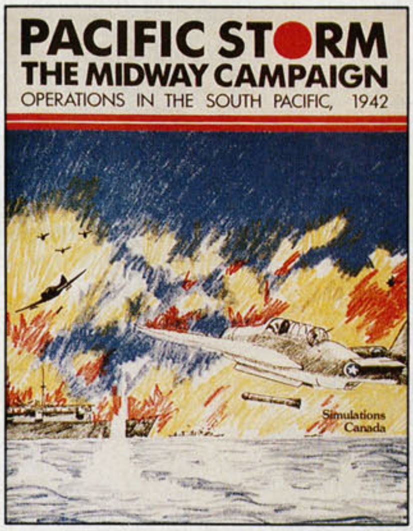
Note: Promotions may come more quickly if the player is awarded the Purple Heart for bringing back a badly damaged plane.

Meeting the Japanese Halfway – American Style

Simulations Canada's Pacific Storm: The Midway Campaign

by Alan Emrich

TITLE:	Pacific Storm: The Midway Campaign
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$60.00
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	R. C. Crandall
PUBLISHER:	Simulations Canada Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, Canada



In 1942, our struggle with the Japanese was a military one. Six months after their sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan had rolled up such an impressive string of military victories that they were ahead of even their own optimistic timetable of victory. Still, many Japanese leaders knew that their economy could not match their Western foes, and that the Allies had to be brought to their knees before they could be brought to the bargaining table, where a negotiated peace could take place.

For the Allies, the Doolittle raid in April, 1942, was done strictly to bolster flagging American morale. While having little real effect on the war, it did wake up the Japanese and encourage them to try another bold move in an attempt to deal a fatal blow to the remnants of the American Pacific Fleet. Pearl Harbor had to be neutralized and the Americans crushed. The stepping stone was a small island in the Pacific which had seen great importance during the previous 75 years as a coaling station for steamships. It was located halfway between Hawaii and Japan and was aptly named, therefore, Midway.

Pulling Up Anchor

For zero to two players (playing at the same machine), **Simulations Canada**'s *Pacific Storm: The Midway Campaign* is a strategic-level wargame covering the crucial eighteen-week period beginning on May 15, 1942, using nine two-week turns. While the Japanese have the initiative, the Americans need a "win" for public consumption, so both sides are on the prowl and in need of a victory. Players assume the role of either Admiral Yamamoto or Admiral Nimitz and have massive naval and air forces at their disposal. Some ground forces are also at the ready, but theirs is a support role in this clash of navies.

Players must make decisions at the highest levels and weigh costs versus benefits carefully. This is particularly important for the Japanese player, because making a large commitment requires drawing from the strategic oil reserve (at a great penalty in victory points). Interestingly, once the player sets the wheels in motion and orders out the fleet, little is left for the player to influence. Instead, one watches events unfold, while only interfering by issuing the highest level of orders (engage, retreat, etc.).

Each turn, one consults the game's main menu and checks the intelligence reports. Here, several sub-menus offer lists of current data on friendly forces, plus estimates of enemy forces and intentions. The latter information is crucial to gameplay, since knowing enemy intentions means knowing when to have the fleet sortie and where. American estimates, thanks to their breaking of the Japanese codes, are usually accurate to the letter, while the Japanese player will have to rely on reports that are less accurate.

New Orders Have Come In

After checking the intelligence reports, one must pull up the strategic menu and create the plan of action for that turn. This consists of answering five questions: Should the operation be direct or subtle? (e.g., should the Americans slam into a Japanese base just to stir the pot?) Will the combat doctrine be to go for enemy carriers first, or battleships? The next three questions concern levels of force commitment. The player can set the tempo of operations (i.e., its breadth and the number of different locations that might be covered during the turn), the force commitment level (committing reserves has a negative effect on victory points) and the risk level (once engaged, how desperately should they fight?).

These decisions made, one's staff works up the detailed orders and the game turn can be consummated. However, for those who like to meddle with individual ships and missions, players can select the operational menu and take a more "hands-on" approach to management. It is here that specific reserves can be added to specific task forces, specific units can be transferred or transported to various locations. The execution of these operations is fairly simple, although this reviewer discovered the process of transporting troops and planes more through trial and error than by his careful study of the nine-page rules manual.

Midway or Bust

Although the game has only one scenario (a head-on collision in the Pacific), some variants are provided. Play can be conducted with either open or, more realistically, limited intelligence. Both sides have a strategic pool of forces (reserves) which can be committed (at a cost in victory points) to operations. Since major points are awarded for intimidating the other player into aborting a mission and for capturing bases, there are clear benefits to taking more risks in the game. However, the risks are only worth it if one wins, so committing the troops to battle can be just a tad nerve-wracking.

Combat is resolved by reading "radio messages" along the bottom of the screen. It is here that the status of the battles will be told, blow by blow. Since there are no graphics in this (or any other) **Simulations Canada** computer wargame (save the map card used for reference when plotting operational moves), reading about the action is all a player can do. Furthermore, sound support is limited to IBM beeps and boops, which punctuate the damage of major ships (such as carriers).

While it has always seemed that $60 is a lot to pay for a computer wargame with no graphics or sound support, it is nonetheless impressive to find a wargame that, at its highest level of play, can be finished in under 15 minutes. If one wants to muck about with the individual forces here and there (and what wargamer could resist?), a normal game lasts for about an hour. The "Storm" series from **SimCan** is one of their best, and this one will pique any player's interest in their upcoming strategic Pacific war game due out later this year. Since **Simulations Canada** games are scarce on the store shelves, here is the address:

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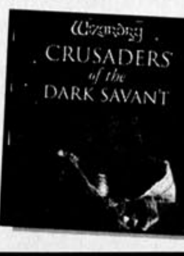
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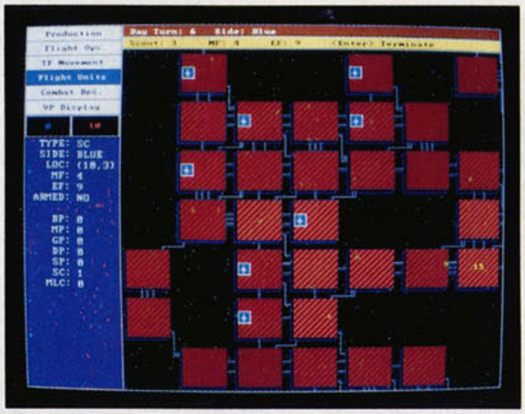
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Carriers in Space

A Strategic Analysis of the Opening Rounds in a Worlds At War Campaign

by Michael Peck



The interstellar conflict between the Blue and Red forces began with fevered mobilization. Both sides constructed their fast-escalating fleets with the realization that the game could be decided by their initial decisions. This article is the story of that conflict, as experienced in a standard 50-turn campaign of **RAW Entertainment**'s *Worlds at War* (*WAW*), with the human player commanding the Blue forces and a computer player commanding the Red forces. The hidden movement provisions for task forces and neutral planets were used.

Production Parameters

Fleets must be tailored specifically to a player's overall strategy. If the plan is to attack aggressively, the initial task forces should, of course, carry heavy offensive armament. In this conflict, Blue took the opposite tack. The Blue Admiralty planned to gobble up neutral planets as quickly as high school students chew up green M&Ms. The operational goal was to avoid combat and, like gas, expand to fill the vacuum.

Though such a plan indicates a more passive strategy than that to which most gamers are accustomed, the truth is that most victory points in *WAW* come from planetary conquest *rather* than space combat. Therefore, the Blue Admiralty used its initial 500 production points to build three troop convoys, with Staying Power and Defense Power of 50 points respectively, as well as five scouts and 45 Marine Landing Craft. The SPs are needed to give the task force speed, the high defense strength will make it a tough nut to crack and the scouts will spot what lies ahead. In this all-or-nothing gambit, the troop convoys carry no offensive armament because the admiralty is gambling that combat will be unlikely in the early stages of the game. More importantly, fleets can always be returned to port at a later date to be fitted with bombers and missiles. Similarly, the planet which contained the Blue base received just 50 points, all of which are used as SPs in order to generate replacement points at an accelerated pace. If trouble were to appear, replacement points could quickly be converted into DPs that would serve to shore up the base's defenses.

Matters of Maneuver

Using the hidden planet option meant that planets would not appear until the auto-scouts reported the sightings on Turn 2. So, Blue's command structure sent its three TFs in a shotgun formation, moving generally toward the southwest and away from the Blue headquarters located in the northeast corner of the map. This procedure was ordered to enhance the chance of getting a jump on new discoveries.

Note that *WAW*'s most distinctive feature is its highly unusual map and movement system. This means that the variable cost to move between boxes each turn — or the severing of links between boxes — makes movement almost as random as the dice rolls in *Monopoly*. Players are well advised to use the **shift** + arrow keys to scroll ahead and see what the boxes look like. Too often, the route which looks like an easy path will halt in a dead end a few boxes down the line.

Although the auto-scouts are fairly efficient, the Blue Admiralty also launched two independent scouts toward the Red map edge in order to hedge its all-out gamble with extra intelligence. The mission objective for these scouts was to locate the Red home base and, as a result, shadow any fleets that might leave said base.

Invasion Information

By the second turn, the auto-scouts discovered several planets. One crucial variable in *WAW* is the distribution of planets, which varies each game. Nothing is more frustrating than watching all the neutral planets appear in an opponent's territory. Fortunately, in the campaign being reported upon, the distribution was balanced, with several planets located in both Red and Blue territory.

The Blue Admiralty immediately dispatched two TFs toward a prime 25-point world nearby, while the third force headed toward a more distant 30-point world. Admittedly, there were smaller (and more easily attainable) planets closer to Blue TFs, but the command staff determined that the additional victory points would make it more

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worthwhile to go for the high-value worlds. Almost as important would be the potential production points they could add to the Blue Empire. The 15 or 20 points produced by a high-value planet may not seem like much, but once those numbers are multiplied by two or three planets over 50 turns, it makes a decided difference. For example, a small TF could feasibly be built on one planet, then could stop at other bases to be fitted with additional equipment.

Still, the hardest part of *WAW* is taking neutral worlds in the first place, because planetary assaults are exercises in frustration. The root of the trouble is the invasion formula contained in the rules book. It essentially gives the optimum attack only a 50 percent chance of success. For example, attacking a 25-point planet with 25 Marines has a 50 percent chance of success; quadrupling the assault force to 100 Marines only raises the odds to 80 percent. A shortage of Marines, combined with the difficulty of transporting them to distant planets, makes overkill tough to accomplish on all but the weakest of worlds.

The Blue Admiralty opted to land 25 points of Marines on a 25-point world, hoping for the most efficacious results. With the negative result, it proved most fortuitous that it had ordered the second TF along as insurance. The second assault proved successful and the brass from the Blue forces managed to breathe a sigh of relief.

Unfortunately, just as the initial victory was secured, the planetary population rebelled against the new military rulers. The bewildering frequency of rebellions is positively nightmarish in *WAW*, because rebellion usually occurs several turns after the planet has been conquered, when a player's forces are busily engaged in some other sector. There is nothing a player can do about it, other than always keeping a few Marines in reserve to reoccupy discontented worlds.

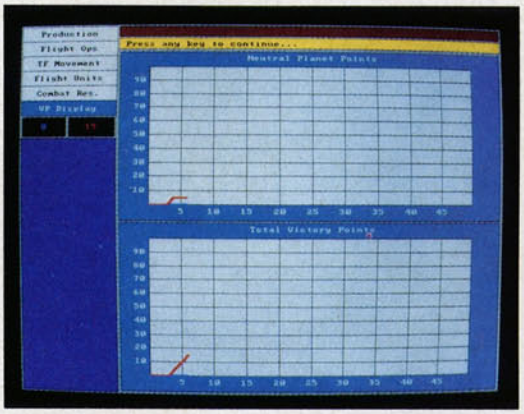
In the campaign currently under discussion, the dejected Blue TFs were forced to return home in order to embark more troops. Meanwhile, Red had already taken two worlds (actually three, but one rebelled), giving it an edge in the victory point race — a point constantly rubbed in by the VP graph which appears every turn.

Bomb Basics

By Turn 5, Blue's two independent scouts had surmounted the labyrinth of boxes and had neared the map edge. On the way, they had also run into a Red bomber formation heading toward Blue territory. It is a good idea to check the strategic map *every* turn, since the computer announces any enemy TFs which have been detected, but neglects to update player admirals on any missile or bomber attacks.

Though *WAW* is a variant on the carrier battles of the Pacific War (why else would there be night flying rules in a space game?!), players who expect to stop enemy bombers with a screen of interceptors are going to be disappointed. There are no fighters in the game and TFs cannot outrun high-speed bombers. Once bombers are spotted, it is too late.

Also, although the rules manual suggests that TFs split up in order to hamper detection, that also leaves them vulnerable to piecemeal destruction if they are detected by enemy scouts.



Defense in *WAW* is based solely on the combined DP of any task forces and bases in the box. Therefore, Blue moved its two nearest TFs together so that the 41 Red bombers would confront a total DP of 100 when they hit. This proved to be a wise decision, since it decimated the bombers at little cost to the defender.

What Goes Around Comes Around

By turn 10, the plans of the Blue Admiralty had started to unravel. Although it had managed to capture the 30-point world, the Red forces occupied three planets in the same interval. In a move of desperation, Blue decided to divert some of its ships to attack Red forces, while the remainder continued the planet-hunting initiated at the beginning of the conflict. To accomplish this, Blue was to refit two task forces with additional Marines, while the third was given bombers. The combat system favors one large strike over several smaller and often uncoordinated attacks, so it usually pays to concentrate all bombers in one task force.

Blue opted not to use any guns, trusting that their plans would not call for their ships to enter close combat range with Red TFs. Missiles were also rejected because, although they are very fast, they only allow one shot. At least, any bombers that might survive could be re-used in a later sortie.

The two "amphibious" groups that were dispatched headed for the 25-point planet, while the attack TF headed toward Red territory, relying on the scouts to provide accurate information on enemy movements. Note that, although the speed of the bombers is impressive, it is easy to launch them prematurely. Bombers must be recovered by the beginning of the fourth turn, giving them three turns to travel to and from their targets. With the high probability that the safe path going in will become a dead end going out, carriers need to go a little closer. This, of course, is a riskier proposition for the carriers themselves, but what is a carrier without bombers?

Blue's carrier TF did manage to close the range on an enemy TF, which had been shadowed continuously by an independent scout. Then it was Red's turn to feel the wrath of carrier-based air power, as 70 bombers pounded a 40-DP task force and managed to decimate it while only garnering moderate losses themselves. This was immediately followed by a retaliatory bomber and missile strike which inflicted light damage. (Presumably, Red's scouts were also doing surveillance.)

At this point, Red was still ahead, but the Blue forces were closing the gap, boosted by the capture of a second planet. Then, with two high-value worlds under its control, Blue felt confident enough to order the bulk of its forces to engage in offensive missions in Red territory, while a single amphibious group would continue to mop up the remaining neutrals.

Whether Blue was to be successful or not would depend on the prowess displayed in the offensive missions against the Red forces. The important factor is that these opening gambits allowed Blue to reach a winnable position. It is to be hoped that *CGW* readers have better battlefield luck and find themselves in a winnable position even sooner than the Blue Empire did in this game. **CGW**



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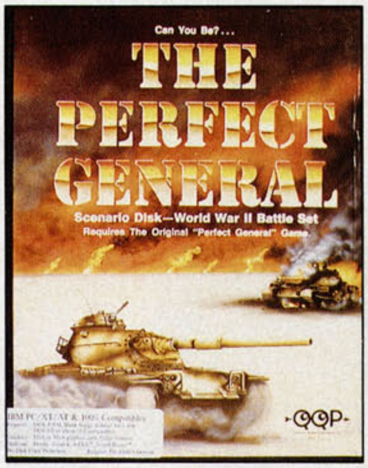
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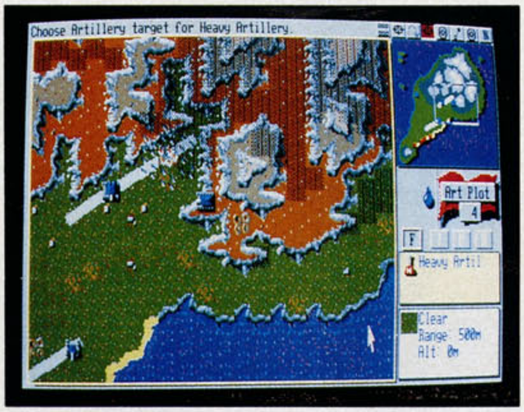
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The Perfect General: WWII Scenario Disk

by Richard Savage





QQP's first scenario disk for *The Perfect General* is a real bargain in terms of price, fixes to the original and playability. This reviewer walked into the local software store and bought a copy for a mere $24.95, quite a bargain compared to what is usually paid for software these days. Upon arriving home and installing the scenario disk, it proceeded to update the latest version onto the Perfect General's .EXE file, fixing a few bugs that had affected the modem play. Excellent! This reviewer had already contacted **QQP** via phone about these bugs, and had received two disks in the mail, at no cost, with all bugs fixed. If all software companies adhered to this policy, a lot of the griping on the Bulletin Boards would cease.

The Battle Set Scenario Disk comes with all the maps in a bound booklet, minus the Pegasus Bridge "Beginner's Game." This is an improvement over the original, in which the maps were loose, with different maps on both sides. Also included is a booklet describing the battles, game length, how many purchase points the attacker and defender receive, special restrictions as to what units each side may buy, terrain and weather effects, reinforcement points to be received by each side and documentation on victory points.

Finally, we come to the scenarios... all 15 of them. Unlike the original game, which only had generic scenarios with a couple of WWII scenarios tacked on, this scenario disk is devoted to battles that a lot of us have come to know, study, and boardgame (if the reader is a grognard like this reviewer is). The folks at **QQP** must have received some feedback on their original game — mainly that players were having the most fun playing "Alamein" and "Patton Kicks Butt." This reviewer played the latter scenario ten times via modem with his trusty opponent, and each game revealed new strategies and different approaches. Clearly, more WWII scenarios were in order.

This reviewer can't help but compare *The Perfect General* to those old **Avalon Hill** boardgame favorites: *Panzer Blitz* and *Panzer Leader*, with the nod going to *Panzer Leader* because of the "opportunity fire" involved in *The Perfect General*. Basically, the new WWII Scenario Disk can be divided into three different categories: 1) Pacific Battles (Guadalcanal, Okinawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Oahu [What if?]); 2) Desert Battles (Kasserine Pass, Gafsa, and Gazala-Bir Hacheim) and 3) European Battles (Pegasus Bridge, Sicily, Anzio, Utah Beach, Omaha Beach, Arnhem and Kharkov).

Finally, issue will have to be taken with Alan's statement in his pre-release preview that this game "little lends itself to modem play." Modem play is the *whole* reason for this game: the wargamer's dream of being able to play a wargame when weather conditions or "wargaming widows" make face-to-face play impossible. Alan mentioned in his preview that too much time seems to be spent "waiting for the other fellow to make his move." Well, time is relative. If one has laid an ambush, setting bazooka teams in a forest next to a road and waiting for the loyal opposition to roar up in a recon vehicle loaded with valuable engineers, one can hardly tear one's eyes from the screen. Another thrill is turning on the "Show Artillery Plots" option and watching one's opponent roll his self-propelled artillery right into the impact areas of those (previously plotted) heavy artillery units! There is simply nothing else like this on the market for those of us who like tactical war games.

How to Become the "Perfect General" in World War II

Obviously, reviewing every battle, along with revealing subtle strategies and hints, could fill the entire issue. Instead, this brief article will be the first in a series of one-page analyses of *Perfect General* scenarios.

This issue features the "Okinawa" scenario. This one is for players who have complained about the lack of a competent computer opponent. When playing the attacker, the player is channeled by the terrain into three corridors, across heavily guarded rivers and through very slow terrain. The defender has a wealth of artillery and mines available, along with some nasty heavy tanks and SPAs. After playing this a few times, one might be able to beat the computer, but it will be close. Against a human opponent, forget it. Casualties among the attacker tend to soar just as they did in real life, and every yard is likely to be measured in smoking tanks and eliminated infantry companies. This reviewer's suggestion to those who play this scenario via modem is to play the long game (15 turns instead of 10) in order to give the attacker any chance at victory and to limit the defender to 200 or 250 points, even in the long game, to get nearly historical results.

Attacker: The best strategy for the attacker is to bring along some engineers to remove the mines that will inevitably be found strewn liberally across one's path and to rebuild the bridges which will have been immediately destroyed by any competent defender. The name of the game for the attacking player is to *advance*, at all costs.

The attacker may even have to use some alleged Russian tactics and march a couple of infantry units across a mine, sacrificing them for the ability to free up that section of the road for the advance.

The attacking player should try to get victory point cities in artillery range and sight as soon as possible in order to let the big guns do their work. The only relief for the attacker is that every time he kills a unit, he knows there will be no replacement for it.

Defender: Thoughtful placement of mines is a must. Defenders should not be afraid to buy six or eight of them. They will be worth their weight in gold in delaying the attacking player. One should also buy an engineer unit and place it in the rear area, on some bridge that the attacker will *have* to cross later in the game. Then, after the engineer blows the bridge, he can lay mines on the opposite bank. When the attacker gets too near, the engineers can be moved into a city, where they will do a better than average job against attacking armor.

Also, heavy and light artillery should be carefully positioned. It is good to count those hexes so maximum casualties can be inflicted as the attacker advances. Deploying infantry units in the woods and on top of hills to spot for the artillery is also important. Finally, defenders should buy a couple of heavy tanks and a couple of SPAs, just to ruin the attacker's day. Nothing is more disheartening for an attacking player than to finally drive a light tank adjacent to a victory city, only to find a heavy tank about to commence opportunity fire on the light tank itself. One cannot resist the chance to crush the attacker psychologically, as well as physically. **CGW**

Sid Meier's Civilization Evolves

by Alan Emrich

Engineers, mathematicians, programmers, handymen... there are certain kinds of people who just *love* to tinker with things. Sid Meier is just such a designer. Each morning during the development of *Sid Meier's Civilization*, he would enter the **Microprose** building and hand a new version of the game to Bruce Shelly. After Bruce, the playtesters glommed onto the new code. By the end of the day, they would have suggestions and comments, and the next day Sid would produce yet *another* updated version of the game in response to these suggestions.

Still, a handful of in-house playtesters can only do so much in the development time allotted. When a game is released, the game-buying public becomes, *de facto*, a vast army of tens of thousands of playtesters. Each individual consumer might have suggestions or comments, and some might even devise a perfect plan or counter to a computer program's artificial intelligence not previously thought of by the smaller, in-house playtest group.

So it was when "a room full of computer scientists, mathematicians and cognitive psychologists" got together and dissected *Civilization* as a puzzle to be solved, rather than a game to be played (of course, they add, "...these are the same people who think graph theory is fun.") Their findings have been posted over many lively strings of information on *CompuServe* and have piqued the interests of designer Sid Meier. They have found two optimal plans for running roughshod over the AI in *Civilization*, to which Sid Meier has responded with yet *another* new version of the game (taking the opportunity to fine-tune *even more* little things along the way).

"They Create Desolation and Call it 'Peace.'" — Tacitus' *Agricola*

Behold, Gus Smedstad [CompuServe address: 71777,2716], the first of a cast of characters who would influence *CGW*'s new #1 rated game, *Sid Meier's Civilization*, and his theory that the way to win at the Emperor level is to continually expand at the expense of the computer's civilizations. The logic is that, since the computer players get such a large advantage in making discoveries, playing a peaceful technology race game is "a sure recipe for disaster." While suggesting staying with Despotism for as long as possible because of its military advantages, Gus' approach was still somewhat "civilized" inasmuch as he advocated building city improvements and wonders of the world, but he still pushed for sails early so that every computer player could be interfered with as rapidly as possible.

Enter Greg Bezoff [CompuServe address:



72711,2616], who took this moderate Mongol maxim to its logical extreme, becoming the "total Mongol strategy," which works, in detail, thusly:
Players limit their city sizes to two or (if garrisoned) three so that no civic improvements need be built to keep the citizens content and thus cause the need for a tax base to maintain them. ("Temples and suchlike don't help me to rape, pillage and loot.") Build only barracks (since they have no maintenance cost) and set the tax and luxury rates to 0% so that every trade unit goes into light bulbs. Concentrate research on The Wheel, Mathematics and Navigation (*id est*, Chariots, Catapults and Sail units). Chariots are the best military units until armor shows up, so deploy them by the swarm.

Next, grow little cities like weeds, raising them to size three (where their growth can be frozen by working coal mines, oil sites, etc. that do not generate any surplus food or by creating a specialist — particularly the very useful scientist) and have them continually contribute their shield production for the aforementioned military units (made veterans by the no-maintenance-cost barracks improvements built). Thus, with the total Mongol war effort, players who never leave Despotism can usually conquer the world by the time Christ would have been born.

Reductio ad Absurdum (Reduction to Absurdity)

While the total Mongol strategy was being debated, a new theory of economic optimization was presented by Peter Delaney [CompuServe address: 73750,3667] and his fellow students at Carnegie Mellon University, Joe Beck and Jeff Duprey. Their collaborative effort, with Joe at the helm, produced a revolutionary game concept called the *parallelia theory*.

Derived from concepts in parallel programming and parallel distributed processing (for which the university's Dr. McClelland is a prime mover), the theory states that many small processing units working in concert with a system for message passing can often surpass the effectiveness of one very large processing unit. In practical *Civilization* terms, this means that a player with several small cities has an advantage over one with a few large cities.

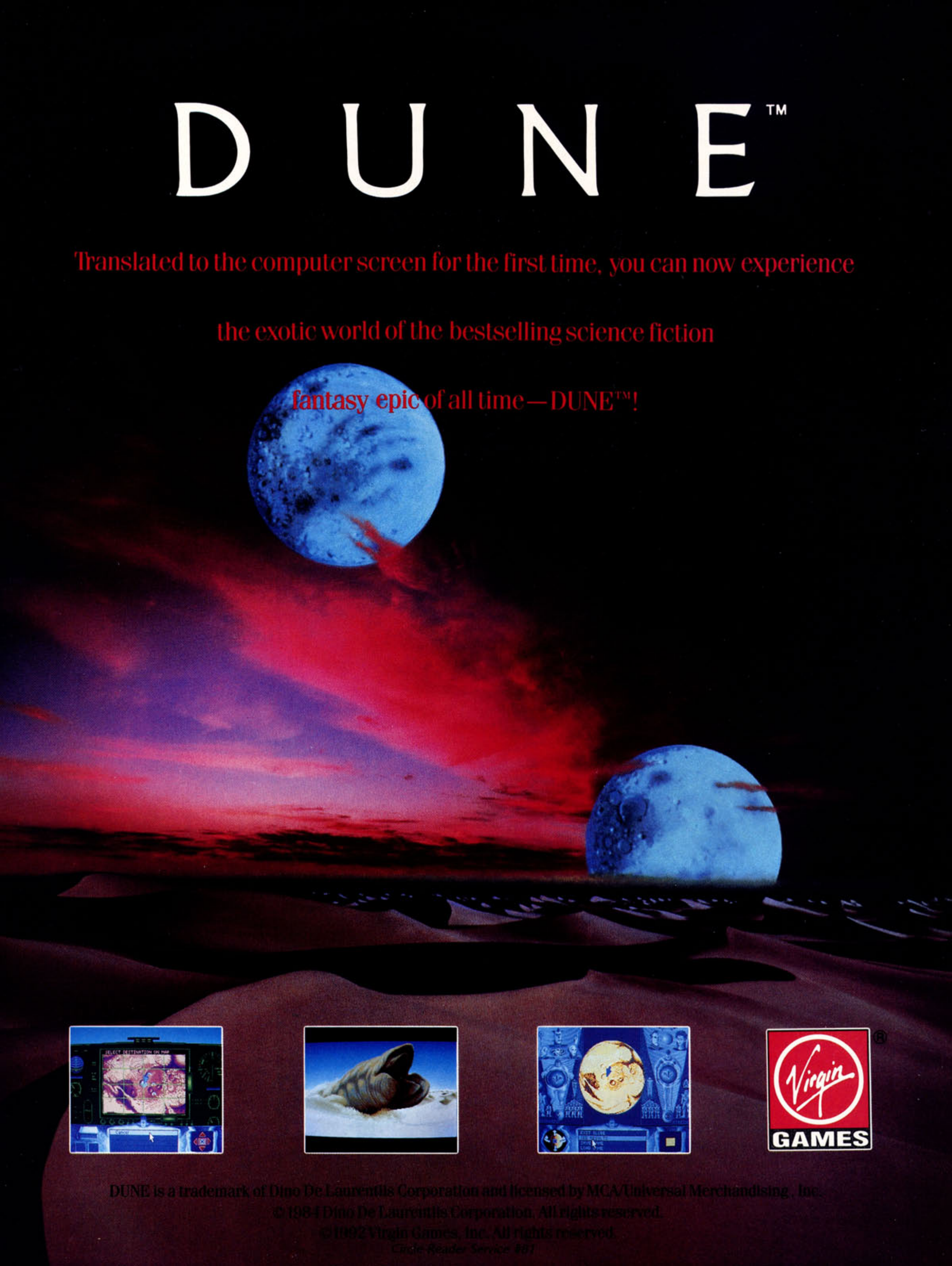
For example, in the pure form, if there were no limit to the number of cities which could be on the map (there is, by the way), one could create a 30 x 30 square of size one cities. These would produce 1800 light bulbs *per turn* through scientists alone (if the player creates that elite citizen right away in each of those cities). This is *in addition* to any light bulbs generated by the player through trade!

Since every city has a "free square" with which it works another square (or can be converted into an elite citizen), a size one city "works" two squares (the city square plus one other). Now, consider that a size ten city works eleven squares (a size fifteen works sixteen squares, etc.), and one can see the efficiency of having many size one cities working two squares each. In other words, size one cities are 100% efficient, with production efficiency decreasing as city size grows.

Another sub-plan of this is the "virus" approach of building as many cities as possible. This will ensure that, once the ceiling in the game is hit, computer players will not be able to build any more cities. Again, this is taking the matter *ad absurdum* (to absurdity), but is an effective mathematical counter to the game's programmed limitations. However, size one cities are vulnerable to enemy conquest. Thus, there was a need for defense, particularly from early barbarian raids. Naturally, parallelia and the total Mongol strategy seemed made for each other, and a perfect match for optimal play was born.

Novus Ordo Seclorum (A New Order of the Ages [is Created])

This, the motto on the great seal of the United States, might also serve well as Sid Meier's motto for game development (particularly in the case of *Sid Meier's Civilization*). In response to these mathematical stratagems, Sid is putting the finishing touches on a 3.0 version of *Sid Meier's Civilization*. Making the best use of such resourceful playtesters as Mr. Bezoff, Mr. Smedstad and the boys of CMU, prototypes have been posted for public use in the **Microprose** library on CompuServe, with constant feedback, therefore, coming in to Sid via e-mail. Perhaps with the new motto of "Sic Semper Tyrannis," the following changes are being made to the initial release version of *Civilization* as taken from the extended READ.ME file included with this latest version:


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23. Cities must have a population base of five or more to support taxman or scientist specialists.

24. Under a Despotic government, citizen unhappiness will increase with the number of cities controlled. This may lead to "very unhappy" citizens (recognizable by their red shirts) who must first be converted to normal unhappy citizens before they can become content. This effect occurs to a lesser degree under other government types as well.

25. A maximum of three units per city may be used to impose martial law (*id est*, convert unhappy citizens to content ones).

26. Cities may be renamed at any time. Click on the new *rename* box or press the "r" key on the city status screen.

27. Transport units no longer contribute to city unhappiness under The Republic/ Democracy.

28. The maintenance cost of Barracks has been changed to 1/2/3 coins at the Prince and King difficulty levels, and 2/3/4 coins at the Emperor level.

Additionally, a few bugs are being remedied. These include the compatibility problem with certain EGA graphic cards, the "never-ending game" bug, screen update re-writes and other small annoyances.

Mutatis Mutandis (Things Having Been Changed That Had to be Changed)

The practical upshot of these changes to the average player of *Sid Meier's Civilization* will be minor. While changing city names adds a classy touch and taking away the "sad face" that transports produce makes sense, most of the other changes are quite specifically designed to counter the aforementioned perfect plans for besting the game's programming.

The increased cost for barracks, however, *is* significant, particularly since computer players do not bear this added burden (chalk up another advantage for the computer players at higher difficulty levels). Veteran units, therefore, will become more precious and the costs of squandering them must be weighed more carefully by human players. The burden of a "military tradition," as simulated by barracks, to support one's own "Mongol strategy" might prove economically prohibitive over the long run to Princes, Kings and (especially) Emperors. While a total Mongol strategy remains viable, its success has been reduced from a virtual certainty to merely probable, depending on the circumstances in play (which is as it should be).

The number of cities that can be managed with increasing citizen unhappiness now has set limits and specific consequences. No longer can players build virus-like hordes



of tiny cities which contentedly worked for the common good. Below is a table indicating the number of cities which a given type of government can support at a specified difficulty level and still continue to use the game's current happiness formula.

When a player's empire grows beyond the size indicated by the number below, each additional city causes a fraction of the empire to be plagued by an additional unhappy person. For example, a despotic government at the Emperor level will function normally up to six cities (for the mathematicians, then, X = 6 in this example). When the seventh one is added, 1/6 (or 1/X) of the empire's cities will have a citizen take on a worse attitude (go from content to unhappy or, when no content citizens are left, from unhappy to the red-shirted "very unhappy" status). The second city added above this ceiling will cause 2/X (or 1/3, in this example) of the cities in the empire to feel the strain. Thus, by the 12th city (2X the safe limit of six), every city will have an additional citizen made unhappy. Beginning with the 13th city (2X + 1), 1/6 (1/X) of the empire's cities will get a *second* citizen made unhappy gratis, and so on for every addition to, and multiple of, the base happiness number given in the table.

All of this can be checked by simply opening up a city's display, clicking on the *happy* button and looking at the first line of the citizen roster. If this line of citizens does *not* show the first few (2 at Emperor level, 3 at King, 4 at Prince, 5 at Warlord and 6 at Chieftain) citizens as content, then they've been hit by this new "imperial discontent" formula. Of course, another way to find out is when carefully balanced populations suddenly riot, indicating that something has increased unhappiness there.

Imperial Discontent Table

Government Type	Difficulty Levels				
	Chieftain	*Warlord*	*Prince*	*King*	*Emperor*
Anarchy & Despotism	14	12	10	8	6
Monarchy & Communism	21	18	15	12	9
The Republic & Democracy	28	24	20	16	12

Numbers in the body of the chart indicate the number of cities owned before additional unhappiness begins.

When this occurs, be sure to hit the *happy* button in order to fully understand why.

Additional Playing Tips and Techniques

Knocking out the usual plethora of defending units in a computer player's cities en route to conquest can be a time-consuming and expensive gamble. After all, winning battle after battle against a pile of (usually) fortified urban defenders can cost several attacking units in the process. The solution: The "20-square siege technique."

Since every government type (save Despotism) requires shields for military units' maintenance, the problem becomes how to reduce the shields a city produces and thus eliminate defending units without firing a shot by "starving them out" through a lack of support. Since every square in a city's radius which is occupied by an enemy unit cannot produce for that city, one must simply place a unit on every *land* square within the besieged city's radius that can produce any shields. This might require up to twenty units to cover every possible square (it seldom does, particularly against coastal cities), but diplomats and caravan units work as well as soldiers for this purpose. Thus, the city will be reduced to a number of units which only the shields generated in the city square itself can produce, Q.E.D.

Another frustrating element is maneuvering through territory developed by another player while at peace with them. This cannot be done without breaking the peace, which is made impossible for those whose governments include a Senate (specifically, The Republic and Democracy). However, there is a way through this rural roadblock. Enemy improved squares can be entered by diplomats and caravan units without hindrance, even while under the conditions of a peace treaty with another player. Simply place one of these unit types in an improved enemy square, and then other friendly military units may stack there without violating the peace terms.

Deus ex Machina (A God out of a Machine)

The world continues to evolve. This is also the case in the many imagined worlds enjoyed by players of *Sid Meier's Civilization*. Here was presented to the reader some perfect plans for defeating the limitations of the game's programming and an announcement of a new version of the game that corrects not only these, but other minor problems in the game as well. The 2.0 version of *Sid Meier's Civilization* can be obtained by calling the Microprose BBS at (410) 785-1841 (2400, 8/N/1), or in the appropriate libraries on either CompuServe or GEnie. Alternately, persons can contact Microprose Customer Service directly and request this latest version of the game. **CGW**

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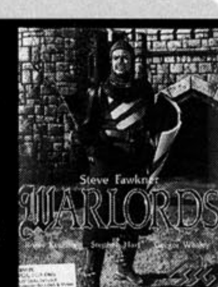
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Interactive Entertainment™

by Russell Sipe

State of the Industry: Genesis times three. In the first Genesis, God created the heavens and the earth out of nothingness. Cosmically awesome. In much more recent times, **Paramount** gave us the Genesis Device of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Do you remember? After the Genesis device is triggered, a huge blast consumes and recreates all matter within its reach. Following the inevitable hair-raising escape from the shock wave, we stand on the bridge of the *Enterprise* and look back on the fantastic new creation. The underlying theme the film-maker wanted us to experience was the shear awesomeness of creation. It worked.

Today, in computing, we are watching Genesis number three. A new thing is being formed right in front of our eyes. Not a creation out of nothingness, as in the biblical account of Creation, nor anything on the scale of what man wrought in *Star Trek II*, but, to those who have eyes to see, an awesome thing is in the making.

Here is information and interaction on a new, exponentially accelerated level, a level unbelievable 15 years ago. Before running my word processor to type this letter, I ran a program called *Street Atlas USA* from **DeLorme Mapping**. This incredible $99 CD-ROM gives detailed street-level maps of the entire USA. From an overview map, I zoomed first to Southern California and got a map showing its main cities and freeway system. From there I zoomed in on Orange County. A detailed map of the county was displayed on my computer, and I zoomed in to Anaheim Hills. From the Anaheim Hills display I zoomed in on my neighborhood. Then I zoomed in to my block. There. Right there on the screen I could point to where my house was located. Pretty damn awesome.

Next I zoomed out to the USA map and checked out the location of my grandparents' old home along a rural road in the South. I zoomed in. There it was. Close your mouth, Russ, the flies will get in.

For the past couple of years, this embryonic consumer-level information and interaction matrix was called "multimedia." The physical vehicle for consumer-level multimedia is that extraordinary little device, the CD. Thus we read about CD-ROM, MPC (Multimedia PC with CD-ROM drive), CD-I and CDTV. Unlike the Bible's Genesis and Paramount's Genesis, this new genesis is taking a bit longer to take shape. But taking shape it is.

Most CD-based multimedia products fall into one or more of three categories: databases, education or entertainment. That is the exact order in which I would place the current manifestation of multimedia products.

The most impressive works in CD-based multimedia today are the databases. For a hundred dollars I now have at my fingertips a street map of the entire United States. Another CD (*Magazine Rack* from **Information Systems**, $90) gives me the complete text of 100,000 current articles from "300 of today's most important magazines" (including *Computer Gaming World*). A third CD, the *1991 Time Magazine Compact Almanac* gives me 10,000 *Time Magazine* articles selected from the 68-year history of the publication (including the full text of the magazine from 1989 through April 1, 1991). Hundreds of photos, full-color charts and maps are reproduced as are dozens of full motion and sound video clips from history (including **CNN** Gulf War videos).

Some have predicted that, due to the Freedom of Information Act and our rapidly growing capability in providing gigabits of data at the consumer level, in less than a decade a consumer will have *home* access to all public computer-stored data available in the USA.

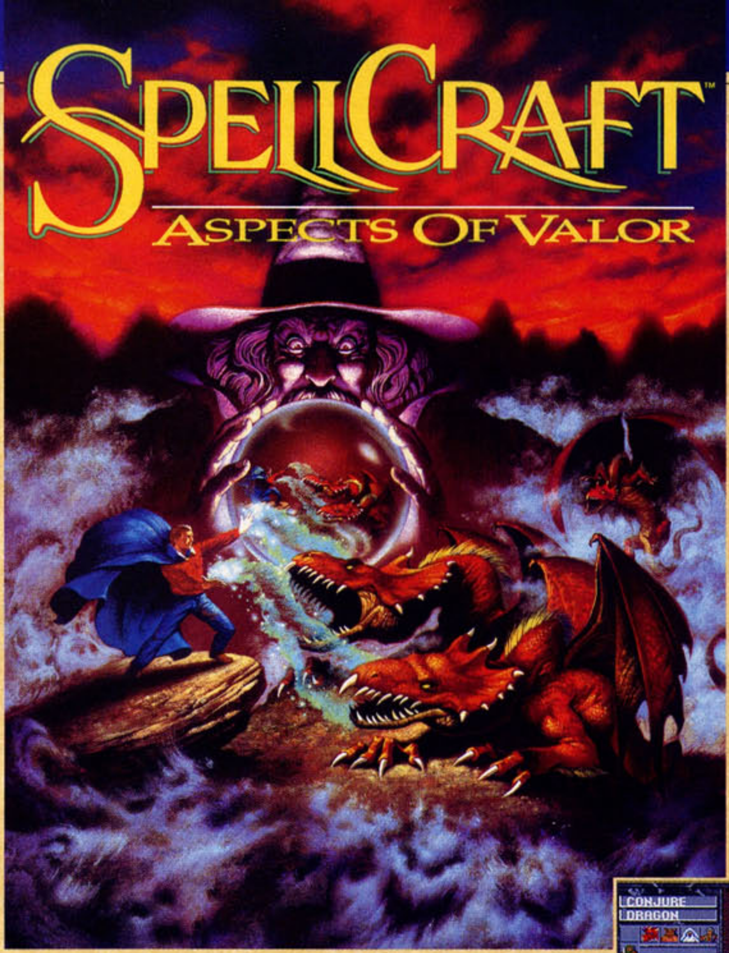
CD-based educational products currently make best use of the sound and video aspects of multimedia. Programs such as *Mammals: a Multimedia Encyclopedia* (**National Geographic Society**); *Multimedia Beethoven: The Ninth Symphony* (**Voyager Software** and **Microsoft**) and the CD-ROM version of *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego* (**Broderbund**) are showing the way.

Unfortunately, for gamers, the weakest category in CD-based multimedia products is computer games. The category is not weak due to a lack of titles; between CD-ROM, CD-I and CDTV, there are *plenty* of games. The problem is that in many cases the first generation of games being released leaves a lot to be desired. The majority of titles released on CD-I, CDTV and, to a lesser degree, CD-ROM are not up to par. Those games that *do* have the level of game-play *CGW* readers are accustomed to tend to be floppy-based games that have been ported to CD-ROM. Most of these are straight ports that add no *new* multimedia capability (e.g. *Wing Commander*). In a few cases, the CD version has been enhanced. For example, the CD version of **Lucasfilm Games'** *Loom* has received a complete new sound and speech treatment that really enhances the game.

Now, there is nothing inherently wrong with a straight port. Indeed, one reason many of the ports retain their value on CD is that a CD-based multimedia platform was in the minds of the developers when the products were created. There is the key: The best game designers have been developing for CD-based multimedia for the past three or four years even *without* the platform. That's why we have games that require a half-dozen or more disks to install. That's why we have a thriving sound card business on the PC platform. That's why the interfaces are being streamlined.

Thus, even though interactive entertainment is making a slow start on CD-based multimedia, the seeds of great growth are there, and those seeds come not from **Philips** or **Commodore** or Hollywood, they come from the computer game design community. So stand on the bridge of your personal *Enterprise* and watch: a new world is being formed before your eyes. And you are part of it!

State of the Magazine: What do we call this new form of gaming? CD-ROM gaming? Multimedia gaming? The first is too limiting; the second too vague. The industry is slowly but surely gravitating to the term *interactive* as if "interaction" was something new under the sun. The annual CD-ROM and Multimedia Conference is changing its name to *Intermedia*. For the first time, the Software Publishers Association will present a panel called "Interactive Entertainment." While the concept of interactive entertainment is nothing new to *CGW* readers (after all, can you think of a better definition of "game" than "interactive entertainment?"), we felt the term was descriptive enough of the coming CD-based multimedia environment that we proceeded to file a trademark in 1991 for the use of the title "Interactive Entertainment" in connection with magazines and books. We feel it is time to use that title. Beginning with this issue, *Computer Gaming World* will carry a new secondary title: the magazine of *Interactive Entertainment™*. In one sense, this new title reflects our roots as the oldest magazine on computer games (i.e. interactive entertainment). In another sense it speaks of our commitment to keep you, our readers, informed on the exciting new world of CD-based multimedia entertainment, or *interactive entertainment*. CGW



Without the Word, There is No Magic.

Without the Magic, There is No World.



Start the game from the Circle of Stones, gateway to Valoria's Magical Realms and re-entry point for the Modern World of Terra.

Catapulted through a portal in time and space, you encounter a Mentor Wizard who will teach you the basics of magic. In return for this coveted knowledge, you must shoulder a grave responsibility...

- Learn to craft and cast spells to save both the Modern and Magic Worlds from the tyranny and destruction of the power-mad, warring Lord Wizards.
- Accept the challenge and travel the Modern World of Terra in search of helpful allies, who will provide you with the knowledge and commonplace objects required for the art of SpellCraft.
- Combine everyday items with the right Magic Words to awaken their magical Aspects. Then, test these spells in combat against Valoria's cunning Lord Wizards.



Conjure a multitude of spectacular magic effects, from scorching fireballs and fire-breathing dragons to ominous armies of orcs.

A challenge to be mastered by only the most experienced player, SpellCraft offers:

- 100+ hours of game play
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Available for MS-DOS and compatible systems.



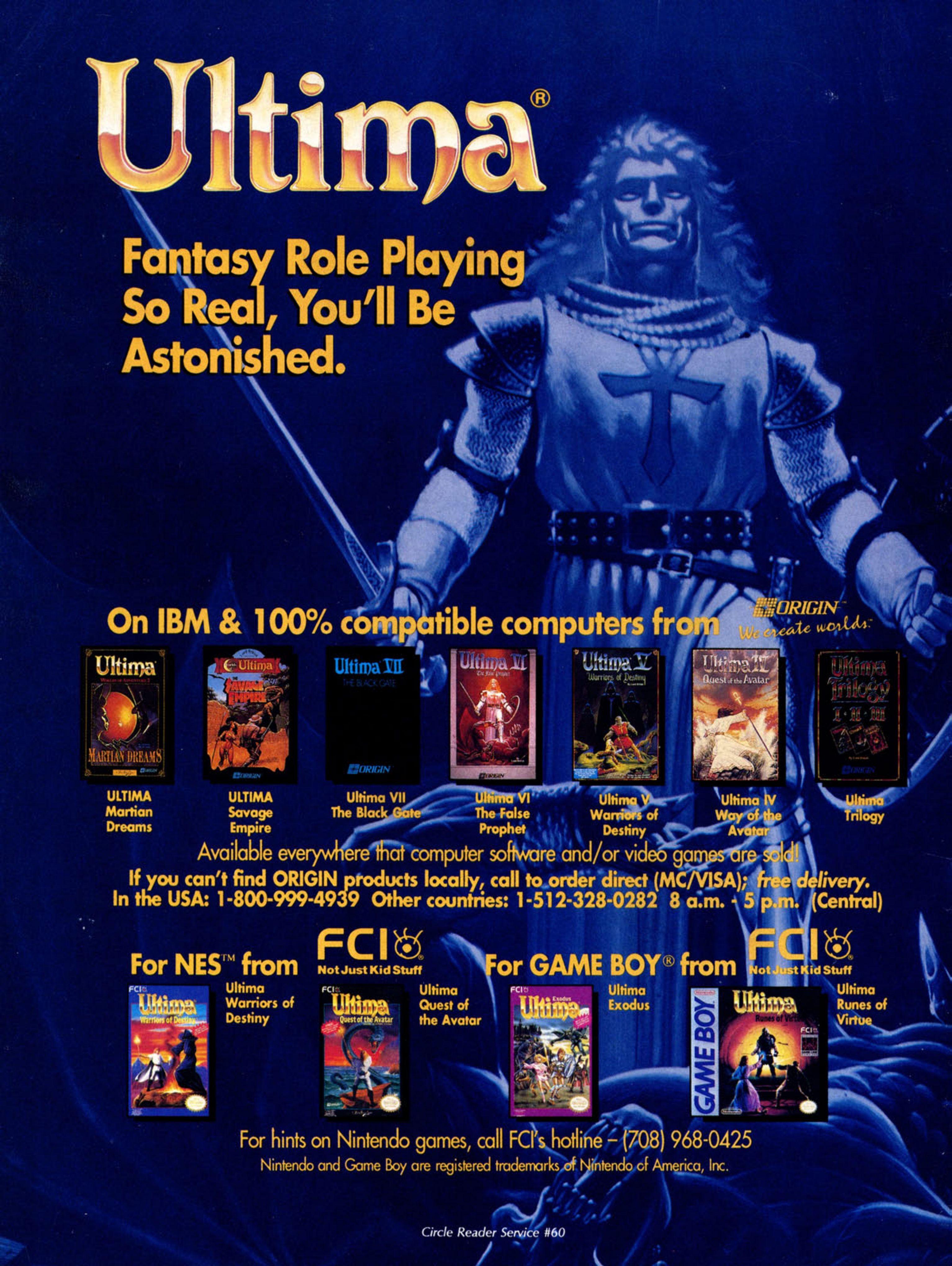
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